



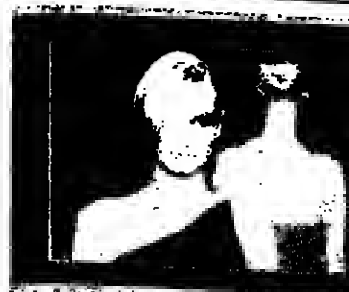
THE INDEPENDENT

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IN THE TABLOID

FASHION
NEW YORK

COMMENT PAGE 20

FREE INSIDE TODAY

20-PAGE ELECTION SPECIAL

One nation once more?

Anthony Bevins
and Colin Brown

Four weeks into the election campaign John Major and Tony Blair will today finally turn the political focus on to divided Britain with an appeal to voters who want a return to the united, One Nation values repudiated during the Thatcher years.

The similarity of the message from the two party leaders is no coincidence, but rather a reflection of an underlying concern of the electorate; that society has become too dangerously divided.

The two appeals, however, could not be couched in more brutally different terms.

For the Tories, Mr Major says in an exclusive article for today's

leader says: "All my adult life, I have kept to the simple beliefs that we achieve more together than we do alone. The rights we enjoy are matched by the duties we owe... I personally believe a divided society is wrong for both moral and economic reasons, yet we are more divided than ever."

The bids of the two leaders for the same political territory, at the same time during the election campaign, with little more than a fortnight to go to polling day, suggests a dramatic make-or-break play for a critical slice of middle-ground votes - informed by similar results from private polling.

Mr Major's message to the Independent was reinforced by a briefing he gave yesterday in which he said that he had been forced in the past to concentrate on getting the economy "on an even keel". Before that had been achieved, he would have been talking into "empty air" if he had attempted to tackle other issues such as improving the state pension, the inner cities and education in the midst of a recession.

"It's perfectly true to say that I feel liberated in the sense that I can now address the social agenda that I have always cared about, that lay behind what I said about a classless society in early speeches. I can now do so against an economic climate where it is practical politics to do something about it."

In his Independent article, Mr Major says that the fundamental truth about Tory government is "that we have governed for the many, and not the few".

Mr Blair will today dissect that claim in a long-planned speech that draws together seven elements of Labour policy - separate policy packages on education, health, pensions, crime, housing, welfare, and social institutions, like the family.

Labour has argued throughout the campaign, and before, that it is fighting for the interests of the many, not the few, for example with its plans to phase out the assisted places scheme to help finance a reduction in class sizes for children aged five, six and seven.

But Labour is also saying that its welfare-to-work proposals, financed by a windfall tax on privatised utilities, is going down very well with the voters, while people are "terrified" about the prospect of pensions "privatisation".

Mr Blair says today: "There is a section of the population for



Blair nibbles baby ... baby bites back

Tony Blair indulges in the timeworn political custom of indulging infants (above) yesterday during a campaign swing through Crawley, West Sussex. James Austin, all of nine months old, was deeply underwhelmed and showed his lack of appreciation minutes

later by making a meal of a Labour election leaflet. Mr Blair said: "The sun's out, in a couple of weeks the Tories will be out," thus echoing Neil Kinnock's over-optimistic words on polling day 1992 when he said "The sun is out, and so are the Tories". Photograph: James Dempsey/PA

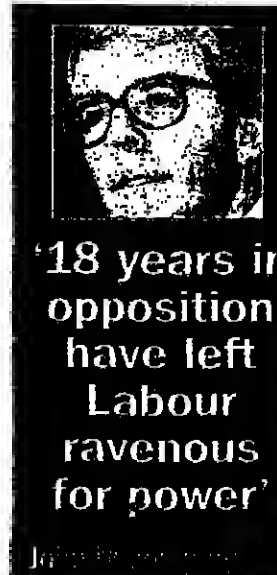


INSIDE
Major rejects EU fish deal, page 10

Schools good enough for Tory ministers, page 12

election '97
Election countdown, pages 10-13

Leading article, page 19
Andrew Marr, page 21



18 years in opposition have left Labour ravenous for power

Independent that he speaks from first-hand experience of inner-city deprivation; that he went into politics to help the "have-nots"; and the voters should not trust new Labour, ravenous for power and mouthing pieties behind the smile.

"When I speak about the classless society," the Tory leader says, "I have in mind the sort of people amongst whom I grew up. They deserve opportunity and choice. They should not be fobbed off with fine words and an easy smile."

For Labour, Mr Blair will today make a speech built around the re-creation of a decent, Nation community. A senior adviser said last night that there was a growing fear of a break-up of society, with the "haves" showing increasing concern about unemployment, crime and disorder.

In today's speech, the Labour

whom work - the habits, the rewards - is now alien.

He argues that neither the Tories nor Mr Major have achieved the classless society that Mr Major said he wanted when he took office.

Mr Major's achievement, Mr Blair says, is that Britain is now top of the league in the

Group of Seven industrialised countries - for the number of families without work up from one-in-twelve back in 1979, to one-in-five.

The Conservative leader said yesterday: "The Tory party isn't one dimensional, you see. People think it's about efficiency ... but [that] is only half the Tory

party. The other half has always been used to a great deal of social change."

Labour's lead is holding, according to new polls from MORI and ICM. MORI, in yesterday's London Evening Standard, had Labour's lead unchanged on 21 points. ICM in today's Guardian shows the gap widening slightly

to 14 points, compared to last week's 12-point margin. As usual, ICM reported a high Liberal Democrat share, at 19 per cent, with Labour lower, on 45 per cent, than other polls. Tony Blair's personal rating fell five points in the ICM poll, to 35 per cent, against 28 per cent for John Major, down one.

QUICKLY

Pilgrims killed

A fire in a tent city outside Mecca in Saudi Arabia killed at least 50 pilgrims, mostly Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, as they attended the annual haj pilgrimage. Witnesses said the death toll was much higher, with some putting it at 300. Page 28

McCartney in vogue

Sella McCartney, 25, daughter of Sir Paul McCartney, has succeeded Karl Lagerfeld to take over as chief designer at the French fashion house Chloé, to the amazement of the British fashion establishment. Page 3

Peace up in smoke

Ulster's fragile peace process has been put to the torch in the past 16 months with arson attacks on 48 churches and 71 schools, according to figures from the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Page 9

Belgium's anguish

Belgium's anguish over the country's child sex and murder scandals looks set to continue unabated. The 15 members of parliament who have for the past six months conducted a public inquiry into the furore - yesterday officially exposed the nation's police and judiciary as dysfunctional and guilty of gross incompetence. Page 16

Army pensions may be run by Germans

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

War pensions and administrative preparations for war may soon be run by a German firm under a privatisation scheme being considered by the Ministry of Defence.

Two foreign companies, Siemens of Germany and EDS, which is American-owned, have been shortlisted by the MoD to run the newly created Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency. A decision was to have been made by July under Tory plans for the agency.

The decision to shortlist a German company angered veterans' groups. Terry English, the controller of welfare for the Royal British Legion, said: "We understand why efforts are being made to reduce costs but this decision may cause considerable anguish amongst ex-servicemen who fought in the war. One would have hoped that they could have found a good British company to run the agency. Some of our old boys will regard it as terribly insensitive."



The new agency, which employs 1,000 civilians and 200 military staff, links together the pay, personnel and pensions provisions of the three services for the first time. According to a parliamentary answer shipped out in the House of Lords by Defence minister Earl Howe, it is also required "to support the personnel management function, in peace (including crisis), transition to war and war".

Under the Tory plans, the private company selected by the MoD would eventually take over the running of most of the services. It would be expected to develop a new computer system integrating the payrolls and pensions of the three services within the next three years.

Mark Oaten, the Liberal Democrat candidate in Winchester, was alerted to the self-off when he canvassed two members of the agency's staff who work at Worthy Down near the town. He said: "They were very worried about the fact that war pensions and preparations for a conflict could be in the hands of a foreign company. This type of work, which involves national security, should be kept in the public sector."

The staff also fear that privatisation will result in redundancies at the three existing centres near Winchester, near Gloucester and at Gosport, and at the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow which will be brought within the agency later. Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, is expected to draw attention to the sale today.

American Indians may have ousted native white man

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

Stand up Christopher Columbus, all may soon be forgiven. American Indians, redesignated recently in politically correct parlance as "native Americans", may not be quite so "native" as all European-type Caucasians may have reached America first.

Anthropologists in the United States, the Washington Post reported yesterday, are considering evidence that "Caucasoids" may have been the earliest inhabitants of north America, and not - as previously accepted - Mongoloid Indians. The evidence is provided by a number of skeletons discovered in different parts of the US, from Washington State in the north-west to Texas in the south.

The shape of the skulls - elongated and sharp-featured - the scientists say, means they are Caucasoid. Their age - the latest carbon-dating techniques show them to be more than

9,000 years old - indicates that they would pre-date American Indians. The skeletons have been unearthed over a number of years, but it was the discovery of a particularly well-preserved one, in Washington State last summer, that suggested a reassessment was in order.

The findings, if they gain acceptance, have ramifications that are as political as they are scientific. The trend in the US in recent years has been towards official acknowledgement that American Indians were the original Americans and that they were gravely wronged by the much later European settlers, beginning with Columbus. Encyclopaedia entries have been rewritten and museum displays have been revised to accommodate the new orthodoxy and show due respect to the Indians as "native Americans".

Not surprisingly perhaps, the "native Americans" appear not to have taken too kindly to the possibility that they were not actually native Americans.

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THE BROADSHEET

Business & City 23-26
Comment 19-21
Foreign News 14-18
Home News 2-9

Law report
Leaders & Letters 19
Obituaries 22
Shares 28-32
Sport 28-32

THE TABLOID

Arts 6,7
Arts Reviews 27
Bridget Jones 3
Fashion 8,9

Finance 18
Listings 28,29
Radio & TV 31,32
Travel 24-26
Weather 30



9 770951 946436

26
news

significant shorts

Fishermen protest over 'Sea Empress' compensation

Compensation for fishermen in west Wales whose livelihoods were damaged by last year's *Sea Empress* oil disaster has been frozen below the full amount. Fishing fleets will continue to get 75 per cent of their compensation claims rather than the whole amount.

The International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund, which has £51m to share out between victims of the incident, decided yesterday to freeze the current 75 per cent payouts until their next meeting in October. The fleets, who were out in force to protest yesterday in the harbour of Saundersfoot in Dyfed, are outraged and are calling on the Fund to pay their claims in full. They said they will take the Fund to court if necessary in order to get their full compensation.

But the Fund stressed that there was only a limited amount of money which must be shared out equally. It is waiting until more claims come in to assess more accurately the total compensation bill. A Fund spokesman said: "It is probable that there will be an increment rise in the amount paid out in the near future."

Matthew Brace

Rape suspect leaps to freedom

A man accused of a double rape escaped from the Old Bailey yesterday after slipping from the cells area into a court - before hurrying himself through a locked glass window to the street below.

The police, the Court Service and Securicor immediately launched an inquiry on how the man, who was brought to the court building yesterday morning on a bench warrant, managed to evade the court security system. It is believed he slipped through a door in the cell area, and mingled with people as they left court for a short adjournment. When challenged by a probation officer, he is understood to have run through an office and buried himself through a locked window into Newgate Street where he made his getaway.

Maverick MP scolded for broadcast



The Radio Authority has warned George Galloway, the maverick Labour candidate for Glasgow Hillhead, about his broadcasting on the Asian radio station Spectrum International.

Mr Galloway (left) hosted a phone-in programme about the Pakistani elections in January where the RA judged that he did not give an equal airing to callers with views opposed to the Benazir Bhutto administration. The Bhutto government awarded Mr Galloway the Hilale-Quaid Azam award for services to Pakistani democracy in 1996. He was also cautioned about promoting his magazine, *The East*, on the show, and Spectrum Radio was fined £2,000 for allowing an MP to host a programme without an opposing MP as co-host.

Paul McCann

Drugs-gang slices off man's fingers

A man was kidnapped by drugs gangsters and had four fingers sliced off with secateurs-like cutters in a horrific attack in a London street, police revealed yesterday.

The 27-year-old victim, who is Danish and of Sri Lankan origin, was grabbed at gun-point in Bowes Road, Palmers Green, north London, on 1 February and bundled into a car by a five-man gang who believed he was a heroin smuggler.

The victim, who has not been named, was injected in the arm with a substance which numbed his hand. Four fingers on his right hand were cut off before the gang dropped him off back in Bowes Road. He was discovered by his brother and sister and taken to hospital where surgeons sewed back two fingers.

Pagan worship suspected in church

Police are investigating vandalism which may have involved pagan worship in an Anglo Catholic church. Numerous candles were moved or lit and a figure of Jesus was smashed and placed on the altar where, police said, a bizarre ceremony appeared to have taken place. The incident, at St John's Church in Crowborough, East Sussex, occurred when the church was broken into between Sunday night and Monday.

Dartmoor plans to rise from ashes

An emergency recovery plan is being prepared for around two square miles of Dartmoor National Park nature reserve devastated by fire a week ago.

The scheme is being funded by the National Grid Company, which is also laying out an aerial survey of the site for English Nature, which owns and manages Treadlebere Down near Bovey Tracey. The Down, a site of special scientific interest, was razed by one of the worst fires in 20 years, and could take 10 years to recover, according to English Nature.

A colony of nationally rare brown fritillary butterflies was destroyed, as well as rare plants. Ten pairs of Dartford Warbler birds were lost. Phil Page of English Nature, the reserve site manager, said: "We shall be working ... to help this site recover as quickly as possible, so that the wildlife can return."

people



Denise O'Donoghue: Press attention said to have persuaded her to decline offer

Front-runner quits race to succeed Grade at Channel 4

Denise O'Donoghue, head of the highly successful production company Hat Trick, and one of the front-runners to succeed Michael Grade as chief executive of Channel 4, has dropped out of the race because of the publicity the role attracts.

O'Donoghue, whose company produces ratings-winners such as *Have I Got News For You* for the BBC and *Drop The Dead Donkey* for Channel 4, is reported to have been at the top of Channel 4's wish list and was twice approached by the broadcaster's head-tuners, Goddard Kay Rogers.

However, it is understood that press attacks on Mr Grade caused her to turn down the job. Mr Grade was famously dubbed "Britain's pornographer in chief" by the *Daily Mail's* right-wing columnist Paul Johnson, because of the nature of some Channel 4 programmes.

The *Mail*, which regards itself as the defender of so-called "family values", has repeatedly and loudly objected to Channel 4 programmes such as *Dylan TV*, *The Red Light Zone* and *The World Tonight*.

Ms O'Donoghue is believed to have been concerned

that newspapers with an anti-Channel 4 agenda would investigate her private life and that she would have to deal with Mr Grade's critics about her own involvement in Hat Trick, comedian. *Have I Got News For You* appeared in the *News of the World*.

The race for the Channel 4 job has so far been played in the shadows but the board will meet to discuss Mr Grade's replacement on 28 April. A decision is expected then or soon after.

Re-entering the race this week is Howard Stringer, former head of the CBS network in the US. Stringer's chances had been dimmed in reports last month because of his inexperience in the UK television industry. He is also being linked to the position of head of Sony in the US. A report yesterday in the *Financial Times* that he was still in the running for both jobs was being interpreted by Channel 4 insiders as an indication that he was still in the running for both jobs.

The two other front-runners for the job are Peter Jones, head of BBC television, and John Wilmshurst, former managing director of Channel 4.

Paul McCann

Henman joins ranks of sporting millionaires

Tim Henman (right), Britain's number one tennis player, is now a millionaire - less than a year after Wimbledon turned him into a household name, according to a new "wealth register" which also reveals that the typical British millionaire is male and in his fifties, whose star sign is likely to be Aries.

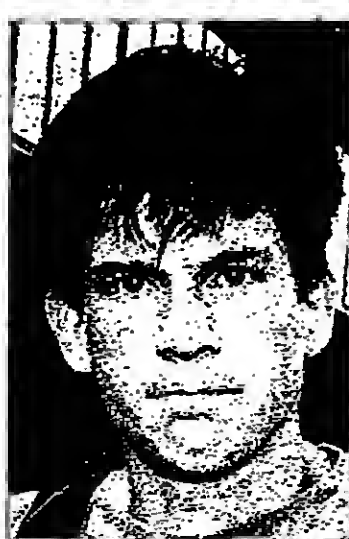
Newcastle United striker Alan Shearer is worth £7m, snooker star Stephen Hendry has potted a £10m fortune, and golfer Laura Davies is valued at £2m, it claims.

The 700-page register details 5,500 of the UK's wealthiest people, ranging from financial Joe Lewis, who is the richest Briton of all with a £2bn fortune, to those with a "mere" £1m-plus.

The *Sunday Times* Wealth Register follows the newspaper's *Rich List*, which was published on 6 April and featured details of Britain's wealthiest 1,000 people.

The *Sunday Times* said its register was the culmination of more than 10 years' work and was "the most authoritative study of who owns what in Britain". Sports stars are said to be making "a major impact" in the wealth league tables.

Henman, 22, who shot to national prominence when he



reached the Wimbledon quarter-finals last year, is worth £1m, according to the register. While Manchester United star Ryan Giggs has built up a £5m fortune which is largely due to sponsorship deals. Boxers Frank Bruno and "Prince" Naseem Hamed are each worth £10m, it said.

Cilla Black is the wealthiest British female in the entertainment business, worth £12m, while Bob Geldof, Roger Whittaker and Elvis Costello are all worth £10m.

Singer Lisa Stansfield is valued at £2m, while Damon Albarn, singer with the group Blur, is worth £5m.

Manic Street Preachers' outraged by song

Award-winning rock band the Manic Street Preachers have criticised another group for recording a song claiming that their missing member, Richey Edwards, is dead.

The song, *Richey's Dead*, has been recorded by Cheltenham rock band Ideal and includes the line "You've got to let him rest in peace." But a spokesman for Manic Street Preachers yesterday said they were shocked at the "tasteless" recording.

Edwards has not been seen since February 1995 when his car was found abandoned near the Severn Bridge. The song claims Edwards threw himself off the bridge, saying: "You've got to know by now that he's thrown himself over. Richey's been released. You've got to let him rest in peace. Richey is dead, Richey's dead."

Ideal singer Will Hutchinson, 23, who wrote the song, said: "It's being tasteless but that's part of the point. If you don't get the joke, you haven't got a sense of humour."

A Manic Street Preachers spokeswoman said: "It's in really bad taste. Police are no nearer to solving the riddle of the 31-year-old musician's disappearance, despite recent claims of sightings on a beach in Goa."

briefing

PLANNING

Car dependency grows as development spreads

Developers are carrying on with the rush out of town, and Britain is becoming more and more car-dependent as a result, the Council for the Protection of Rural England said yesterday.

It published a report which argued that, despite important changes in government planning guidance to local councils - who decide whether to grant or refuse permission for out-of-town developments - building of supermarkets, cinemas, leisure centres, business parks and housing outside the urban boundary or on its edge will continue.

For instance, at the end of the 1980s, there were 29 multiplex cinemas, in 1995 there were 76 and by 2000 the industry is forecasting at least 130. Many are on the edge of cities with large car parks and can only be easily reached using private cars. Meanwhile, smaller town-centre cinemas such as that in St Albans, are forced to close in the face of the competition. The CPRE report calls for tougher policies from central and local government, including a new tax on business and retail car parking.

Planning More to Travel Less, CPRE, Warwick House, 25 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PP Nicholas Schoon

TRAVEL

Passengers play the waiting game

Unlucky travellers had to endure average delays of more than two hours on some holiday charter airlines last summer. Others were fortunate enough to travel with carriers which experienced average delays of only about 15-16 minutes, according to the first ever charter airline punctuality table.

The worst charter airline for punctuality was Belgium's Challenge Air, which ran 65.2 per cent of its 244 flights more than one hour late and had an average delay of more than 2 hours and 47 minutes. Top of the punctuality charts was VIVA, the charter arm of Spanish carrier Iberia. Only 4.9 per cent of its 680 flights was more than one hour late and its average delay was just 16.5 minutes.

The UK's biggest holiday airline, Britannia, had an average delay of 16.8 minutes on 18,679 flights - the highest number of flights in the survey. Only 7.1 per cent of Britannia flights were more than one hour late.

The statistics were supplied by passenger group the Air Transport Users Council and covered charter flights to and from nine major UK airports between April and October 1996. The airports were Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Luton, Manchester and Newcastle.



HEALTH

Breakthrough in cancer treatment

An important hurdle has been crossed by scientists attempting to develop the world's first cancer vaccine. It was announced yesterday. Researchers in the US reported the first hard evidence that a vaccine works in patients and has practical potential.

In one of the first trials of a genetically engineered vaccine, a team at the Johns Hopkins Oncology Centre in Baltimore, Maryland, succeeded in activating patients' immune systems.

The vaccine was given to 18 patients with advanced kidney cancer to test its safety and effectiveness over an eight-year period. One patient, whose tumours had not grown and spread to his lungs after surgery, showed a substantial improvement for several months after receiving the vaccine.

Although the rest showed no signs of remission, all had measurable immune responses. Many patients died within the first year of the trial.

The findings are reported in the journal *Cancer Research*.

NATURE

DNA test to catch badger-baiters

Scientists at Leicester University have developed a DNA test for animals which could make badger-baiting a thing of the past. The technique allows prosecutors to link any animal matter found on an alleged baiter with a specific animal.

In the past scientists could only say whether or not the blood or tissue was from the badger species.

This has allowed baiters to claim in their defence that they were digging for foxes - which is lawful - and that any badger tissue found on them came from the foxes' den.

The new technique is similar to Professor Sir Alec Jeffreys' human DNA test - which was also developed at Leicester. It is now to be used for the first time in an RSPCA prosecution next month.

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Shy Stella McCartney strides into top Paris house of fashion



Rising star: Stella McCartney at her flat before the launch of her own-label designs, shown left Photographs: Chris Moore



Melanie Rickey

Stella McCartney, 25, daughter of ex-Beatle Sir Paul, has succeeded Karl Lagerfeld as chief designer at the French house Chloé, to the amazement of the British fashion establishment.

The appointment of Ms McCartney has come as a complete surprise because of her apparent lack of experience. She graduated from St Martin's college in London only two years ago, has never held a catwalk show and has only produced three small collections available exclusively through London and New York boutiques. Though she has never been one to seek the limelight personally or professionally, with her best friends including the models Naomi Campbell and Kate Moss she doesn't need too.

In fashion-land new design appointments are big news. John Galiano's appointment to Christian Dior last October, which was closely followed by Alexander McQueen's arrival at Givenchy, pushed British fashion pundits into a state of hysteria, and the French

establishment into shock.

Ms McCartney's collections to date have been a fusion of the manish tailoring techniques she picked up on Savile Row, and the lingerie-style dresses and skirts inspired by her time at Christian Lacroix and her collection of vintage underwear. "I am not a chick for seasonal dressing," she has said, "and it's important to have the feminine and masculine thing combined."

Kate Moss loves her clothes as do the top American fashion editors who swoop on her west London flat every time they visit Britain. They invariably buy her wispy slip dresses sprinkled with beads and team them with long-tailored jackets that have "Whistle and Flute" embroidered into the lining. Katie Grand, fashion editor of the magazine *Dazed & Confused* is also a big fan. She said: "I think it's brilliant news. Chloé are obviously taking a risk with her, and good for them."

Some cynics may well be thinking that Ms McCartney's appointment is a PR exercise, riding on the Brit-fash wave and using

the illustrious McCartney name.

To some extent they would be right. It worked for Bernard Arnault, owner of Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton (LVMH), when he orchestrated the Dior and Givenchy deal with Galiano and McQueen which revived the fortunes of both companies. Vendôme, which also owns Cartier, Flager, the Karl Lagerfeld line and Alfred Dunhill, are using McCartney in the same way, but with

a long-term goal - to revive interest in the company which was worth £524m in 1994.

Chloé embodied fashion in the late Seventies. It was diaphanous, colourful and served as high fashion's interpretation of the gypsy look. Throughout the Eighties Lagerfeld's kudos kept the label going, but in 1988 Martine Sitbon changed the mood from floaty and ethereal to more toned-down tailoring.

Ms McCartney's appointment will fuse the two key elements that have kept the company going - the masculine and the feminine - and could well attract the young customers lured away in recent years by hot new labels such as Prada and the re-vamped Gucci.

Yesterday Ms McCartney made her first visit to the Chloé atelier at the Rue du Faubourg St-Honore in Paris. A spokeswoman said: "She is so excited about this post, Stella has been meeting everyone today, and practising her French." The deal, for five years, is for an undisclosed sum, but she will be on a very healthy salary, probably in the region of £100,000. Her first collection showing this autumn will make her the youngest chief designer in Paris. Her own label will be discontinued, but one thing is for sure: this McCartney will be bringing a breath of fresh air to the label, and a bevy of supermodel fans.

Lagerfeld's swan-song for Chloé took place in Paris last month to a backdrop of kitsch props with models wandering around like lost sheep. It was seen by many as an exercise in frivolity by the Chanel, Fendi and own-label designer who had worked for Chloé from 1965-1983 and then from 1992. As a result, there was little speculation on a successor, but many believed it would be Peter O'Brien, head designer at Rochas, who worked at Chloé in 1986-87 or the Brit, Antonio Berardi, who was also approached by directors at Vendôme, the company who own the label.

McCartney clan determined to stay out of the limelight



The McCartneys: Bound by talent, including music and photography. Photograph: Rex Features

Sir Paul McCartney has determinedly shielded his children from the showbusiness limelight. Nevertheless, with an ex-Beatle for a father and the nation's best-known vegetarian for a mother, they inevitably make the headlines: Heather, 34, the eldest and Linda's daughter from a previous marriage, makes designer pottery; Mary, 27, is an accomplished photographer and picture editor with her father's music publishing company, MPL Communications; and James, 19, is a student who has yet to choose a career.

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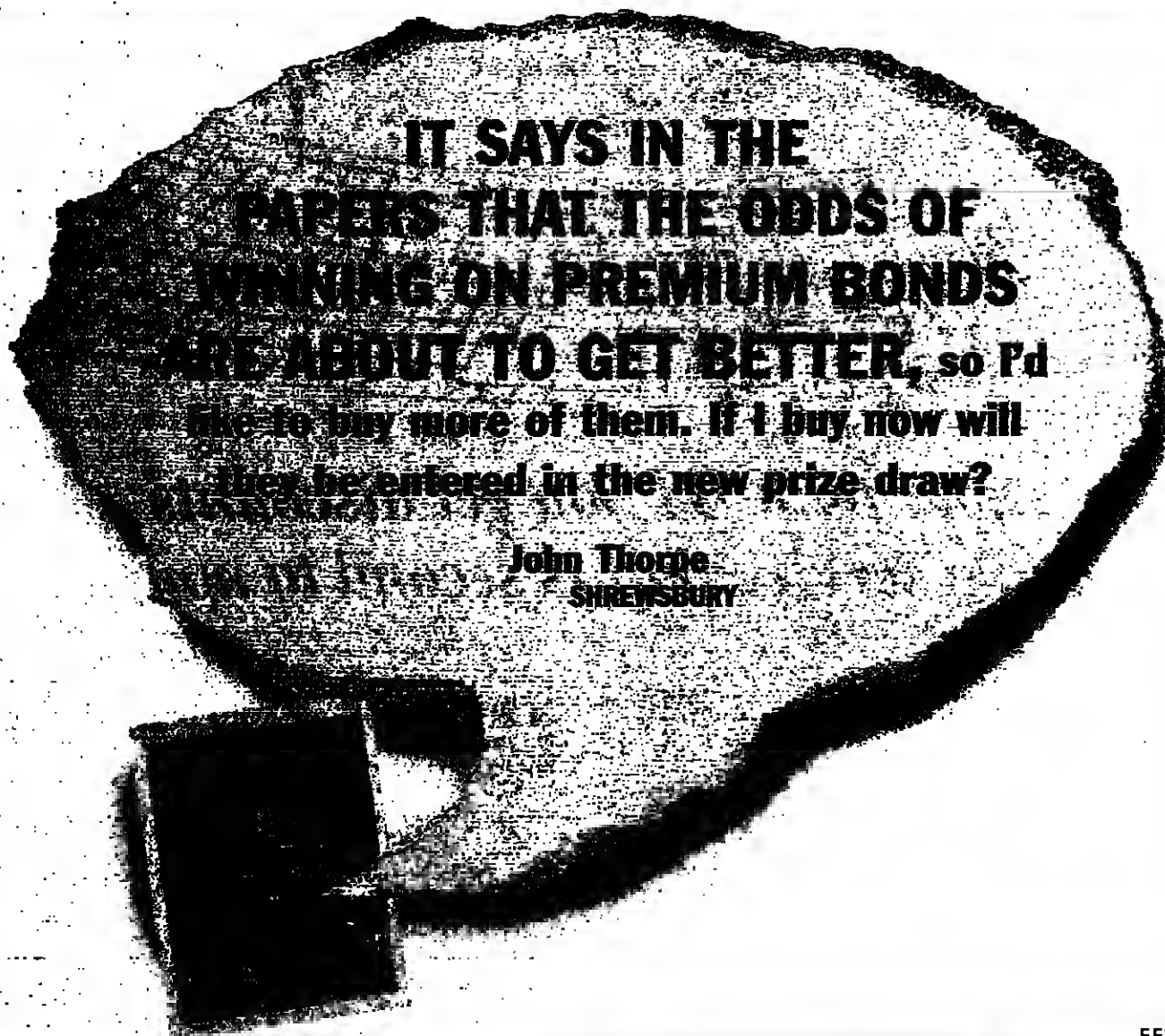
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news

Doctors admit to giving drugs by stealth

Ian Burrell

An ethics row has broken out in the medical profession over the need for doctors to lie to patients about the drugs they are being given. Doctors have admitted to slipping drugs to patients of tea given to patients or giving a false description of the effects of the drugs.

One nurse was suspended after carrying out a consultant's orders to give an elderly patient a tranquilliser in his tea without

his knowledge. No action was taken against the consultant, leading to charges of double standards being applied to doctors and nurses.

The practice of deceiving patients over drugs is believed to be widespread among physicians working with geriatric and psychiatric patients.

A recent survey of psychiatrists at Heathlands Mental Health NHS trust in Surrey found that 38 per cent of doctors admitted to having

participated in surreptitious prescribing or having been economical with the truth.

Six doctors admitted to having ordered a drug to be given in a disguised way. Five said they had lied about the type of drug given. All thought their practice was justified.

Dr Peggy Norris, secretary of the European Doctors Union, which campaigns for patients' rights, said: "You don't give medication to a patient without their consent. If they are so

mentally incapacitated that they cannot understand then at least the relatives should know."

David Curtis, a consultant psychiatrist at the Royal London Hospital, east London, said he was "appalled" by the practice of surreptitious prescribing. He said: "I had hitherto assumed that patients who claimed that such things were going on were paranoid, but I wonder now if on occasion my attempts to reassure them were misplaced."

The issue emerged after John Kellett, a consultant geriatrician in south London, revealed details of a case where a patient was sedated without his consent.

The patient, a 91-year-old widower, had become hypomanic and was not in a fit state to return from hospital to his residential home.

The man refused treatment and rather than give him a forced tranquilliser injection, Dr Kellett asked a nursing sister –

the only member of staff trusted by the patient – to give him a tranquilliser, disguised in a cup of tea.

The patient was told of the action the next day and agreed it had been appropriate. However, on the orders of the chief nurse, the nursing sister was suspended. She has now returned to work after a period of depressive illness resulting from the disciplinary action.

In a letter, Dr Kellett said: "I did not give the patient his

drugged tea myself because he would not have accepted it from me; the nurse concerned naturally hesitated when I asked her to give it and I foolishly assumed her that I would take full responsibility." Yesterday he spoke of his anger at the way the nursing sister had been treated.

"I think she should be given a formal apology and compensation for the damage caused to her," he said. "The nurse is still at work but if anybody refuses medication she

becomes extremely anxious."

No action has been taken against Dr Kellett. Last night Stuart Horner, chairman of the British Medical Association's ethics committee, criticised hospital managers for the way they had handled the case. "What concerns us is that managers saw fit to deal with the two groups of staff separately. We really must treat all health-care professionals alike. To go for the easy target sounds to me typical of managers," he said.

Royal Shakespeare Company upstages National with plan to take Bard round Britain

David Lister
Arts News Editor

The Royal Shakespeare Company is to stage a rock'n'roll style nationwide tour in an attempt to bring the Bard to 80 per cent of the population.

The decision to visit 29 towns and cities in Britain means the RSC is visiting twice the number of locations as the National Theatre.

Indeed, it is somewhat provocatively adopting the logo Theatre For The Nation on its new brochures and publicity material, despite the obvious similarity to the name of its rival. The English National Opera does not leave London at all, while the Royal Opera House will barely be taking the Royal Opera or Royal Ballet out of town, even during the House's two-year closure.

The RSC's nationwide tour will be its largest yet, and in some towns the company will perform in leisure centres and temporary structures, where there are no theatres.

Its artistic director, Adrian Noble, said last night: "The whole nation invests in the Royal Shakespeare Company and it is essential that as much of the nation as possible is able to share in its success. The RSC will now perform more plays, in more places, to more people, making us truly a theatre for the whole nation."

The company's new season will present more of its work outside Stratford-upon-Avon and London than ever before.

The RSC announced some time ago that it would be axing its London operation at the Barbican Theatre in the summer from this year, and only play the winter months in London, with annual seasons in Plymouth and Newcastle upon Tyne as



Wide horizons: Adrian Noble, artistic director of the RSC

well as playing the whole year at Stratford.

But this week the company will announce a much larger than expected touring schedule, which ranges from Belfast and Glasgow to Macclesfield, Warrington, Whitby Bay and Rotherham.

The extent of the touring operation has come as a surprise,

and is part of Mr Noble's growing conviction that a national company must live up to its name by getting out of London.

Even during its two year closure, the Royal Opera House will be presenting most performances by the Royal Opera and Royal Ballet at alternative London venues. All three venues chosen by the Royal Ballet will be in London.

The Royal Opera has chosen four different locations, all in London, with a visit for just one night to Birmingham, and one Benjamin Britten opera opening in his home county of Suffolk, and another production premiering at the Edinburgh Festival.

The English National Opera does not perform outside London at all, and the National Theatre has 15 weeks of touring for selected productions, but no annual seasons at provincial venues.

The RSC, meanwhile, will open its month long season in Newcastle in September, and launches its brand new Plymouth season in October with the transfer of Stratford productions including *Hamlet* with Alex Jennings, *Cymbeline* with Joanne Pearce, and Tennessee Williams' *Camino Real* starring Susannah York.

But at the same time a new circuit of venues from Darlington in the North-east to Poole in the South-west will receive a

new production of *Cyrano de Bergerac* starring Antony Sher. Also in the autumn, *Henry V* with Michael Sheen will play at venues including The Barbican in London, Glasgow, Canterbury and Hull. A tour of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Michael Attenborough, will tour leisure centres across the UK in the RSC's mobile auditorium.

As well as taking productions nationwide, the RSC's education department will work with 20,000 teachers and young people in 60 towns across the UK.

The creation of an annual tour to mid-scale theatre venues allied to the first RSC season in Plymouth, will make the company available to more people than ever before. Its work will be accessible to 74 per cent of Great Britain within a 45-minute drive of their homes. In England, RSC productions will be accessible to 81.5 per cent of the population.

The RSC is also following the rock'n'roll route by extending its touring abroad. It is currently playing in Delhi and in Auckland, New Zealand. The company will shortly announce plans to take productions to New York and Washington.

The first new-look London season will run from November 1997 to May 1998. The Barbican Theatre is currently being refurbished and during the RSC's summer absence it will be host to the Royal Opera.



Leading lady: Susannah York, as she appears on the front cover of the Royal Shakespeare Company's new season programme. She is starring in Tennessee Williams' *Camino Real* as the company aims to visit 29 of Britain's towns and cities

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Heart swap was morally wrong, says mother

The mother of a boy who suffered crippling brain damage after a heart transplant operation told the High Court in London yesterday that she had deep-seated spiritual objections to organ transplantation.

Matthew Poynter, 10, suffered severe brain damage during the operation at Harefield hospital in west London nearly 10 years ago. His mother, Linda Poynter, told the court: "Just because we can do something, it doesn't mean it is right to do it, especially in the medical field... when they cloned a sheep, there was outrage."

Mrs Poynter, and her husband, Kevin, who live in Bedfordshire, are suing Hillingdon Health Authority for damages, claiming doctors failed to warn them of the brain damage risk.

Mrs Poynter, who accuses the hospital of "bullying" her and her husband, an osteopath, into consenting to the transplant despite their spiritual objections, agreed she would have been "delighted" if the operation had gone well. "But I would still feel uneasy in myself. Transplants are wrong. This is

something I feel deeply inside," she said.

The health authority says the risk of major brain damage was so small – less than one per cent – that it had no legal duty to give a warning and that, in any event, a warning was given in this case.

Matthew's new heart, transplanted by Sir Magdi Yacoub in December 1987, is still healthy, but the brain damage he sustained while being prepared for the operation has left him totally crippled.

Mrs Poynter agreed with Philip Havers QC, for the health authority, that she eventually overcame her objections.

"I couldn't find a reason to say no," she said. "I wanted to say no, but the decision was for Matthew." But had she been told of the brain damage risk – even a one per cent risk – she would have refused consent.

Mr Havers asked how it could have been in her son's interests to deny him the chance of several years of life. Mrs Poynter replied: "I did not believe Matthew had that very good chance. He was a very sick boy." The case continues.

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Feathers tickle fancy of rare bird squad

Esther Leach

Feathers are being used to build up a DNA data base which will help convict thieves who steal birds of prey and eggs from their nests.

The information will be used in random testing, allowing police to accurately identify for the first time where and when protected birds such as merlins, peregrine falcons and goshawks were taken.

"We know who are taking

them and this is the kind of proof we need to clinch convictions," said PC Steve Downing, wildlife officer with West Yorkshire Police. "It is very difficult to detect and then prosecute these dedicated thieves. Up until now we have had to rely on blood samples to prove the origin of the birds and these are very difficult to collect," he added.

"This new information will be used to prove that chicks being sold as captive-bred are in fact

wild birds. We will actually be able to pinpoint the nesting site and the young bird's parents.

"This is a major breakthrough and when we have tried and tested the scheme it will have a huge impact on the bird population of this country. All we really need now is custodial sentencing and I believe we could almost wipe out this cruel trade."

The extent of loss and suffering among birds of prey was very serious, he said. In the

Keighley and Calderdale police divisions alone last year all the young merlins bred in the wild were lost and all the peregrine falcons except for a lone chick. Goshawks suffered significant losses and out of 12 nesting pairs of hen harriers, only four young birds survived.

Feather samples will be taken by licensed ringers, the Peak, South Pennine and Sorbybreck Raptor groups who visit the nests to ring young birds. Dropped feathers from the nest

will provide the source of the DNA.

David Parkin, a geneticist at Nottingham University, carried out the work to enable a comprehensive data base to be built up using DNA samples from feathers.

The scheme is being piloted by police forces in Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire during this year's breeding season before going nationwide.

It has the financial backing of

the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Department of the Environment as well as Yorkshire Water, North West Water, the Severn Trent Water Company and the Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency.

A nation-wide survey by the British Trust for Ornithology has disclosed that during the past 25 years, populations of some of our best-loved garden birds, including the omnipresent

great tit and bullfinch, have fallen. The bullfinch has declined by 37 per cent during this period with average brood sizes being among the lowest ever recorded for the species. It is now on the BTO's high alert list. The greenfinch is now ranked as a low alert bird after an increase in the number of nests lost containing eggs.

The reason for the decline of the birds is closely linked to a change in farming methods. The RSPB strongly believes

that an increase in the use of herbicides and the "grubbing up" of hedgerows have drastically reduced the birds' natural habitat and food supplies. A lot of farmland birds visit gardens, so the decline has a direct spill-over to the urban bird table.

The BTO's Nest Record Scheme has been running for about 60 years, the longest in the world and during the past 10 years nest finders have recorded more than 30,000 each year.

Why being a target could be only hope for rarest bird

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

A rescue plan was launched yesterday to help ensure the survival of the black grouse which is suffering one of the fastest rates of decline of any British bird species.

The grouse, which is twice the size of the smaller and much more abundant red grouse, is still legally shot for sport in some parts of the country.

But the very fact that they are still a target could help to save them, argues the Game Conservancy Council.

Numbers have halved since 1989 and there are now about 6,300 males left in Britain.

At dawn yesterday, 24 of them were competing with each other to win females at one of their traditional "lekking" sites in Landgon Beck on the North Pennine moorlands in County Durham.

The males, in full breeding plumage of black with white tails fill the valley with their low, hurling song.

They face up to each other at the lek, dash forwards and leap high in the air, fluttering furiously. The one who puts up the most impressive performance and sees off most rivals wins the most females.

The black grouse has disappeared from all of southern England and



Courting couple: Black grouse preparing to mate in the North Pennines after the male had seen off rivals at the 'lekking' ritual

Photograph: Laune Campbell

there are only about 150 males in Wales. Some 400 are thought to survive in their English stronghold in the North Pennines, with the great bulk of their numbers in Scotland.

They need good quality moorland with a mixture of low shrubs, heather,

and grass providing plant food and insects for adults and vulnerable chicks. And they need woodland to provide, other parts of diet, and shelter in winter. They are birds of the moorland fringe.

The greatest threat to their sur-

vival is thought to be the degradation of their habitat, caused mainly by overgrazing by sheep - which is encouraged by European Union subsidies.

The Game Conservancy Trust, English Nature, the Royal Society for

the Protection of Birds and the Ministry of Defence have combined to create a three-year recovery project which will research and demonstrate methods of land management which boost black grouse numbers.

Three army ranges in the region

will be used as well as private land. Julian Murray-Evans of the Game Conservancy Trust said although there was a voluntary moratorium on black grouse shooting in England, some were still killed on estates where the right kind of land man-

agement kept the population healthy and stable.

"The possibility of shooting them if their numbers recover gives landowners an incentive to do the things which the black grouse needs," he said.

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David McNeill



Life in space: False colour radio images of the M82 galaxy captured by Merin (Multi-Element Radio-Linked Interferometer), a set of radiotelescopes across Britain. On the left, the shell-like cloud of rapidly expanding gases left from a supernova. On the right, the galaxy itself, 10 million light years away. The bright points are the supernovae - stars which have exploded in the last 1,000 years.

A star is born as a galaxy dies, 10m years ago

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

These are images of stars dying in a nearby galaxy - and in the process, providing the building blocks for new stars and planets. They may also give clues about how the earliest galaxies in the universe were formed.

Using radiotelescopes distributed around the UK, British astronomers have built up the pictures of M82, a "starburst" galaxy just 10 million light years away in which stars have formed at an enormous rate but have now reached the end of their lives and become supernovae.

The study of supernovae, which burn at a terrific rate before throwing off most of their mass in a cosmic explosion, is important for the study of galaxy formation, according to Tom Murrow, who led the research at Jodrell Bank for the University of Manchester.

Dr Murrow said: "As a galaxy forms there's a burst of star formation in which a vast number of stars are created. We're trying to understand how that occurs."

"Starburst" galaxies like M82 are uncommon among nearby galaxies, but when the universe was only about a billion years old - less than a tenth of its present age - most galaxies were undergoing rapid bursts of star formation like this.

So far the team from Manchester has identified the remnants of 50 supernovae which have exploded in the past 1,000 years.

"We would like to understand the rate and period over which stars form," said Dr Murrow. By combining the latest data with pictures from the Hubble Deep Field space telescope, which shows very early galaxy formation, they could build a clear idea of the true age and size of the universe.

Ulster peace in flames: 48 churches, 71 schools put to the torch in 16 months

David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

In the early hours yesterday Seamus Armstrong, who last year retired after 31 years as a fire officer, found himself in a graveyard with his two sons, racing up a hill towards his place of worship.

When they reached it the little church looked quite normal from the outside, but inside was a different story. Two major fires had been started, the main one on the altar. They had burnt themselves out when the Armstrongs arrived, but the interior of the church was ruined.

Early yesterday, standing with other shattered, distressed parishioners in the car park in an atmosphere of weary helplessness, Seamus Armstrong related what happened.

"The housekeeper rang our house

at about 25 to one and I and my two sons came over. We were just making our way in when the fire brigade arrived," he said.

"The church was that airtight that it was completely burnt out, but the heat in it was colossal."

"It's completely gutted - pews, ceiling, the whole lot, all singed and scorched, heat and smoke damaged. The lead on most of the new windows melted. They're only in a year - the nameplates of the donors were just put up there on Holy Saturday."

St Peter's Catholic church at Stoneyford, Co Antrim, had just joined the long list of lost buildings that have fallen victim to sectarian arson. The tradition of torching "the other side's" premises goes back decades, but is now reaching new peaks.

Since the beginning of last year, ac-



Fr Dermot McGaughey surveying damage at St Peter's. Photograph: Pacemaker

cording to Royal Ulster Constabulary statistics, there have been fire attacks on 48 places of worship, 71 schools and 44 halls. Most of the targets have been Catholic premises. The rate of

attacks is running at around 10 a month - so many that the fire brigade is issuing special leaflets advising churches on how to cope.

Seamus Armstrong described how

the loyalist arsonists had gone about their business. He said: "Somebody dropped them off on the road, and they went up through the graveyard. It was drizzling and you could see the footprints. They broke in through the door with a jemmy-bar, went up to the altar, sprayed it with a fire accelerator and lit it. They left four plastic containers, two of them in the altar, which melted. They started another fire near the door, then they closed the door and locked it again."

The present church was built in the 1970s, but a Catholic church has stood on the site for 200 years. Nearby gravestones date as far back as 1795. The site now holds the church, a hall and a primary school. The hall has been attacked only once, but the school was blown up in the 1970s. It now consists of a series of mobile classrooms, every window covered

with stout steel grilles, because the mobiles have themselves hereo attacked three times in the last five years.

Michael McGarrity, chairman of the parish council, stood in the school and said: "It makes me sad, sad. It's fear, people just have fear. I think as individuals we all have to try to do something, large or small, to foster better community relations. You have to try to do something, you have to keep on going, keep on trying, but it's very difficult to know what to do."

The headmistress, determinedly cheerful, had her classroom of five-year-olds sing a cheerful song for him. Their open smiling faces, free of worry and fear, showed that they have been well protected from the sectarian storms raging through Stoneyford, and so many other parts of Northern Ireland.

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election '97

Major refuses Europe's fish cuts

Katherine Butler
Brussels
and Nicholas Schoon

Britain will ignore yesterday's European Union vote for deep cuts in fishing catches until the problem of quota-hopping is resolved, John Major said yesterday.

"I have not a shred of intention of cutting the British catch unless and until we have a satisfactory agreement on quota-hopping," said Mr Major.

minutes after EU fisheries ministers voted 13-2 for cuts of up to 10 per cent in fishing effort to save threatened stocks.

He repeated that Britain under the Tories would block agreement at the final Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) talks in Amsterdam in June if its dispute over foreign quota-hopping vessels was not resolved.

The Labour leader, Tony Blair, countered the Prime Minister's attack on the Luxembourg route saying: "A Labour gov-

ernment would get a better deal for the British fishing industry. In my view Mickey Mouse would get a better deal than this lot."

Gavin Strang, Labour's agricultural spokesman, said: "We don't rule out refusing to agree the conclusions of the IGC if these conclusions do not address the quota-hopping problem."

Mr Major said: "It is not right for this country to move down a more centralist European route with more decisions tak-

ing in Brussels, perhaps against the interests and instincts of the British by the Qualified Majority Voting of our partners. That is not on offer from the British at the IGC."

British fishing leaders challenged Mr Blair to commit Labour to blocking the IGC talks on the future of Europe unless Britain's EU partners agree to outlaw quota hopping.

Barrie Deas, chief executive of the National Association of Fishermen's Organisations,

said: "The Conservatives say they will block the IGC and obviously with the possibility of an incoming Labour government we want the same level of commitment."

Alec Smith, of the Scottish White Fish Producers' organisation, said: "This issue is serious enough to alter votes in the election. We are facing a major problem and I would say that without a commitment from Labour every bit as strong as the one we have today received

from the Conservatives then vote for the Tories."

Tony Baldry, the fisheries minister, was outvoted when a majority of EU ministers backed conservation plans requiring cuts of up to 30 per cent in fleets fishing the most endangered species. Although he took part in the discussions and, according to the Dutch EU presidency, did not make any reference to quota-hopping during a morning of negotiations, he emerged to declare the

outcome was "irrelevant" to Britain. "The UK is simply not prepared to contemplate any further cuts in the fishing fleet until the issue of quota hopping is resolved," he said.

His defiance could leave Britain open to prosecution in the European Court. Emma Bonino, the EU fisheries commissioner, said she had always taken the UK to be a law-abiding nation. "We have taken a decision now, I expect Britain to comply with it."

Hamilton balks Bell with legal threat

Jojo Moyes

Martin Bell, the prospective independent candidate for Totton, hit his first electoral hurdle yesterday when he was forced to postpone his nomination because of legal threats over calling himself the "anti-corruption" candidate.

Mr Bell was supposed to be outlining his policies yesterday evening. Instead, he found himself revealing at a press conference that Neil Hamilton, the former Tory constituency MP at the centre of "cash-for-questions" allegations, had "thrown his lawyers" at him, after Mr Bell was advised by the returning officer that describing himself as an "anti-corruption" candidate could leave him open to a legal challenge.

Brian Longden, acting returning officer and chief executive of Macclesfield Borough Council, said: "I pointed out to him [Mr Bell] that his nomination was a good one. I've also pointed out the right of other candidates to inspect nomination papers and object and, in the light of that information, Martin Bell just indicated to me that he will consider the issue afresh before formally submitting his nomination papers."

Mr Hamilton, at a hastily arranged press conference a week to the day and on the same site of the "battle of Knutsford Heath", declined to say whether he had prompted Mr Longden's comments. "I can't disclose the contents of any discussion that I might have had privately with the returning officer," Mr Hamilton said.

But at the town hall earlier, both candidates spent more than three times the time usually allotted for nominations in talks with Mr Longden. Mr Hamilton, whose own nomination went through without a hitch, said that if Mr Bell were allowed to stand under that label and his own electoral chances were subsequently found to have been prejudiced as a result, then it raised the possibility of Mr Bell being unseated under an electoral review.

He accused Mr Bell of "breaking his promise" not to campaign on the sleaze allegations, and called for him to withdraw from the electoral race, echoing Mr Bell's own challenge to Mr Hamilton the night before.

"Mr Bell has obviously betrayed that trust and forfeited any right to be a candidate in this election. It's still not too late for him to stand down and scuttle back to Hampstead where he belongs," Mr Hamilton said. "If Mr Bell is trying to turn his campaign into an extension of the *Guardian's* character assassination against me then he is prostituting himself," he added.

Mr Bell, in turn, accused Mr Hamilton of being the "most discredited MP in Parliament", and said that the name of his party was simply a technicality as everyone knew what he was standing for.

He insisted that he would not be intimidated, and added: "I will file papers in the morning having taken legal advice. He should know I will not back down."

Opponents exploit Tory splits over currency

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Continuing Conservative splits over Europe were yesterday exploited by Tony Blair, who said that if John Major was re-elected, the Tories would fight "like ferrets in a sack."

But Mr Major said that Dame Angela Rumbold, a Conservative Party vice-chairman and the latest candidate to defy the leadership line on the European single currency, was not a member of the Government.

"Like every other backbencher she is entitled to express her views on an issue which may or may not, may or may not, come to fruition in unknown circumstances at an unknown time," the Prime Minister said.

Dame Angela, who is defending the highly-marginal Labour target of Mitcham and Morden, dismissed all criticism.

Michael Heseltine, Deputy Prime Minister, told his party's daily election press conference: "We are not going to conduct a witch-hunt - to borrow a phrase from the Labour Party - to the views of individual candidates."

But when Peter Lilley, the Euro-sceptic Secretary of State for Social Security, was asked if he could imagine circumstances in which he would back a single currency, he said: "I have such a fertile imagination, I can imagine almost anything."

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said the Conservative Party was now at war with itself. "Be in no doubt this is the beginnings of the break-up of the Conservative Party," he said, "that's what we are seeing, it's ceasing to be a coherent and cohesive party

that's able to follow through a coherent policy."

"Whatever your views about Britain's interests in Europe, a party at war with itself cannot prosecute those interests effectively."

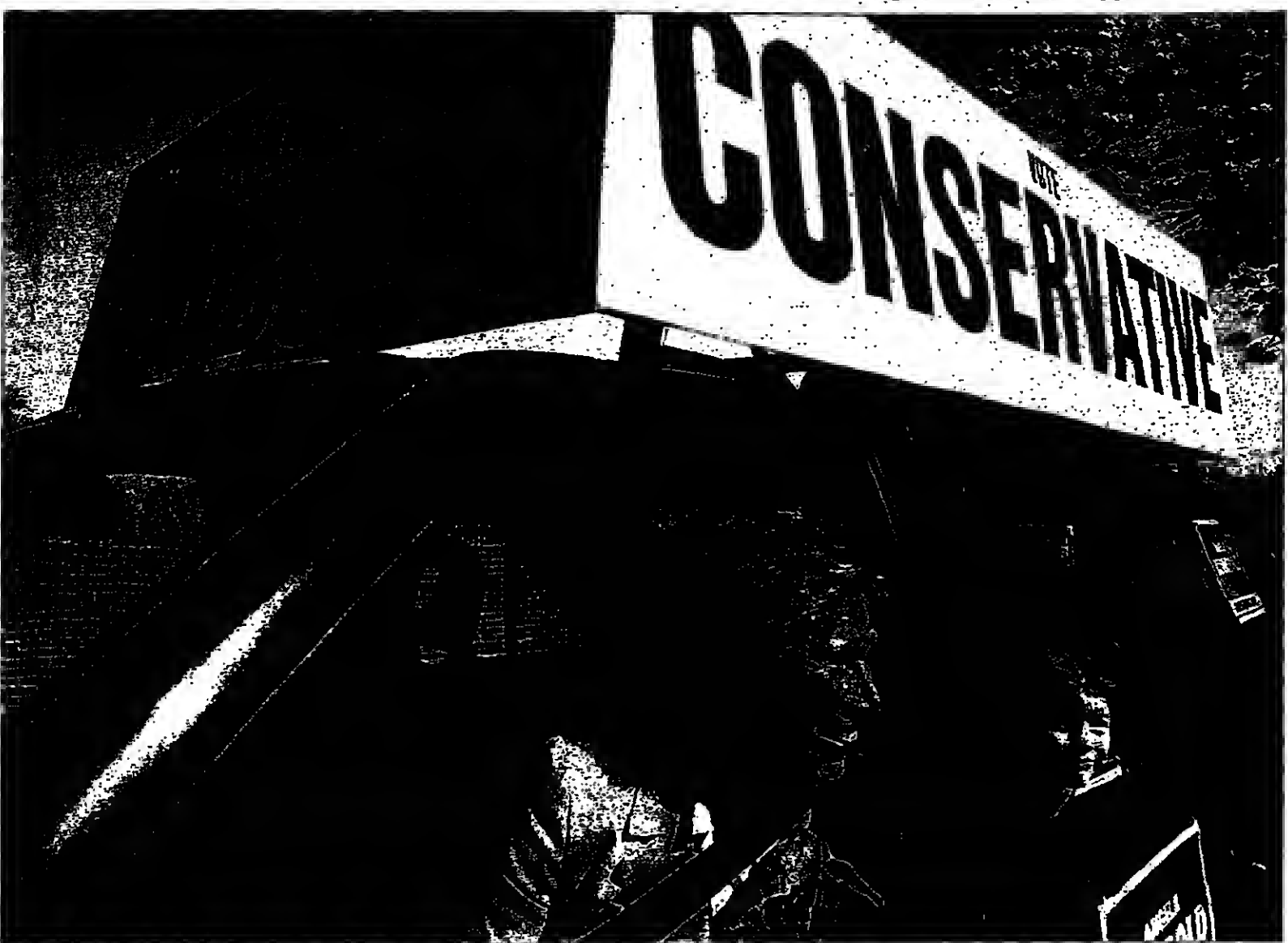
Mr Ashdown said Mr Major was the captain left alone on the bridge of a sinking ship, and former Tory MP Emma Nicholson - who switched to the Liberal Democrats during the last Parliament - likened Dame Angela to a "loose cannon" on the deck of the same sinking vessel.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, preferred at his press conference to cite the views of Edwina Currie, a Conservative candidate, who told the BBC radio *Today* programme: "It's a bit odd if policy is being made by candidates now and not by the people I thought were responsible for policy, which was the Prime Minister and the Cabinet."

But Mr Blair told Labour's daily press conference: "No one knows where the Government stands. No one even knows where government ministers stand."

Mr Blair said that as far as Labour was concerned, there was "no insuperable constitutional barrier" to joining up to a single currency, provided it was the right thing to do in British interests, and had the support of a referendum.

That was not the case with the Conservatives, he warned. "You focus for a moment on what would happen if these Tories get re-elected," Mr Blair said. "They'd be like ferrets in a sack; they'd be tearing each other apart. Decision would not be taken on the basis of national interest. Every single decision would be according to the state of play of the factions."



Battle bus: Dame Angela Rumbold on the campaign trail in her Mitcham and Morden constituency

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Farmers demand head of Hogg

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Douglas Hogg is likely to face the chop after the general election following a meeting yesterday between hostile farmers in west Devon and John Major who was told that the Minister of Agriculture's head would be the price for their support.

The minister has been hidden from view by Tory campaign strategists who realised a high-profile for Mr Hogg would be a disaster for the Tories in the election. Mr Major's aides said last night that it was unlikely he would be dismissed from the

Cabinet if the Tories were re-elected, but he could be moved.

The Major camp pointed out that Mr Hogg is a strong supporter of Mr Major - his wife, Sarah, was the head of Mr Major's Downing Street policy unit before she was given a peerage by the Prime Minister.

Mr Hogg's head has been demanded repeatedly by the farmers for his handling of the beef crisis and the minister is understood to have offered his resignation, but it was refused by Mr Major who has continued to blame the European partners for refusing to lift the ban on exports of British beef.

Mr Major's support for Mr Hogg has not stopped the minister and his trademark - a brown fedora - becoming a hate figure for the farmers, natural Tory supporters, who have seen their livelihoods threatened with bankruptcy as promises to have the ban lifted were broken.

Mr Major braved a meeting with the farmers at Tavistock cattle market yesterday and in a private session in one of the auction pens is understood to have left the farmers in no doubt that Mr Hogg would be replaced.

Ian Pettyfer, the chairman of

Devon National Farmers' Union, said: "I made it clear that a lot of farmers have lost confidence in the ministry team and in one person in particular. I didn't name him, but everybody knew I was talking about Mr Hogg."

"The thought of Hogg being brought back will worry quite a lot of farmers. The Prime Minister made it clear he would start afresh with a new team and adopt a hands-on approach to the agriculture ministry."

John Dawe, chairman of the local branch of the NFU, said: "If we think that the Minister of Agriculture is staying we

will not vote Conservative." Farmer Martin Howlett, 36, made a one-man protest about the ban on British beef. He has a herd of 200 cattle and said he was faced with bankruptcy.

"I have always voted Conservative but I have very serious doubts this time. I don't think I will vote in this election. I don't have faith in the way they have handled it," Mr Howlett said.

He would not vote Liberal Democrat, he said, and voting Labour was out of the question, so he is planning to abstain and he warns that many other farmers were also thinking of abstaining.

Dobson insists water firms repair customers' leaks free

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

Within days of being elected, a Labour government would demand that water companies offer free leak-repair services to all their customers, the party's environment spokesman, Frank Dobson, said yesterday.

All the companies would be

expected to set up hotlines to which customers could report leaking supply pipes, dripping taps and overflowing toilets.

The companies will be summoned to a "drought busting" summit meeting with ministers, the water industry regulators and representatives of consumer and environmental groups. It would be held as soon

as possible after election day, and seek consensus on tackling this year's looming drought and any future ones.

But yesterday Mr Dobson, a persistent critic of the privatised water industry, said he expected the companies to start work now on an "immediate crash programme" to mend leaks from customers' pipes free of

charge. They would have to present their plans at the meeting. The companies would not be allowed to take extra water from boreholes or rivers if the drought worsened unless they had implemented such plans.

There is no legal obligation on water companies to repair customers' leaks and Labour has no plans for immediate

legislation to change this - but it is confident they will comply. Yesterday Thames Water, Britain's largest water company which also has the highest leakage rate from its mains, said: "We'd have to look at exactly what they say if they're elected... But we've got a big enough job to do on the leaks in our own mains pipes."

John Rayner, managing director of the Teudring Hundred water company in Essex, said: "I don't think companies will have difficulty in complying with this proposal." His company is in the very driest part of the country, has the lowest leakage rate and has not had any hosepipe bans in living memory. But it does have a policy of

metering households which use a lot of water. Labour, however, is strongly opposed to compulsory metering.

"Selective water metering is the sensible way forward - it has to be," Mr Rayner said. Ofwat also said the best way of detecting small leaks was to install meters, which can pick up the continuous escape of water.

THE HURRIED VOTER'S GUIDE

THE CAMPAIGN

The day began with the news that Dame Angela Rumbold, a Tory party vice-chairman, had spoken out against a single currency. Edwina Currie, the European Conservative candidate and former minister, accused the Prime Minister of allowing candidates to set policy.

In Totton, the anti-sleaze candidate, Martin Bell, postponed handing in his nomination papers after being advised his description of his party in his papers could leave him open to a legal challenge.

In Europe, Britain was out-voted as new targets for the transfer were set in the name of conservation. Fishermen's leaders immediately warned Labour to take a strong stance on the issue or risk losing votes.

Labour announced plans to set up education "action zones" to try to boost standards in urban areas, and the Liberal Democrats criticised the Government for its "persistent failure" to safeguard public health and the interests of consumers and farmers over the continuing BSE crisis.

Labour's new British bulldog, star of the party's election broadcast last night, was attending a photo-call yesterday. But David Blunkett's guide dog, Lucy, was less keen to share the limelight and stayed hidden behind the podium at Labour's morning briefing. "She's fed up with press conferences," her owner explained.

KEY ARGUMENTS

Labour and the Liberal Democrats sought to capitalise on the Conservatives' growing split over Europe, with Labour claiming that a disunited party was unfit to govern.

However, Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, said no action would be taken against candidates who stepped out of line, echoing comments made by Labour's Robin Cook two days earlier.

"We are not going to conduct a witch hunt - to borrow a phrase from the Labour Party - to the views of individual candidates," he said.

Meanwhile, Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, was attacking the Liberal Democrats. They "are, as they have always been, handmaidens of socialism," he said.

Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, was asked whether he could imagine any circumstances in which he would vote for a single currency. "I have such a fertile imagination I can imagine almost anything," he replied.

Meanwhile Tony Blair, who used to play in a group called the Ugly Rumours, had a pledge for the music industry: "I'll tell you what I'm going to do for British rock music - I'm never going to play in a band again."

GOOD DAY



Yesterday was a good day for SNP leader Alex Salmond, who revealed that his mother was considering voting for him for the first time. Mary Salmond, who has been a Tory supporter for more than half a century, is considering switching because she was disgusted by the massive profits of the bosses of privatised utilities. "As a small-gas shareholder, that example of corporate greed was the final straw for me," Mr Salmond said.

ONE TO REMEMBER

Labour's best brains have been applying themselves to keeping Britain's best brains from emigrating. They have some catchy names for their ideas: a national trust for talent (otherwise known as the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta)) will promote "innovation incubators" and turn the "brain drain" into a "brain gain". Gordon Brown, announcing the initiative, said the brains "are coming home".

BAD DAY



Yesterday was a bad day for Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture. As reports are it he could be heading for the chopping block after the election. John Major met a group of disgruntled farmers at Tavistock cattle market yesterday, who promised their support for the Conservative Party in return for Hogg's head. "Tory campaign strategists have so far succeeded in keeping Mr Hogg hidden from view during the campaign."

HOGWASH



Local candidates are in luck - they no longer have need of policy papers or party manifestos. They cannot fail to win if armed with crucial data provided by marketing company CCM. Essential information regarding the knowledge that the people of High Peak will not ruin their lawns by the garden; the folk of Blackpool drink less bottled water than those in Sharnford and Leicestershire prefer hard floors to soft carpets.

THE OTHER PARTIES

Actor Leo McKern, otherwise known as Rumpole of the Bailey, is to present the UK Independence Party's election broadcast. He will interview the party's leader, Alan Sked, in what is described as a "humorous performance" to underline their opposition to the European Union.

MEDIA STAR



Tony Blair made baby-kissing the centre of his election campaign yesterday, and chose Crawley as the place to do it. Blair was the photographic hot choice for a baby-kiss with the Labour leader, and duly had a baby-kiss with a young girl. A photograph of Blair kissing the girl was shown on the television screen.

David Wiggley, the Plaid Cymru leader, rejected suggestions the party was linked to groups who launched a fire-bombing campaign targeted at English-owned property in the late Eighties and early Nineties. He said: "I condemn it without reservation. We made that very clear when the fire-bombing was going on."

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Poverty begging to go on political agenda

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

In the hope of getting poverty on to the political agenda, two pressure groups yesterday issued election briefings criticising the Conservatives for the extent of inequality and low incomes in Britain.

But they had scant praise for the policies proposed by Labour and the Liberal Democrats. One claimed Labour thought welfare was undesirable, while the other warned that a minimum wage set at too high a level would cost jobs, while at a sensible level it would do little to help the low-paid.

The Child Poverty Action Group accused Conservative governments since 1979 of a "pro-active strategy of inequality". It conceded that the blame for increasing poverty could not be laid entirely at the Government's door, but said there had been nothing inevitable about inequality increasing dramatically more in Britain than other countries.

The CPAG also noted that public opinion favoured more spending on universal benefits such as health and education but had moved against paying higher taxes to benefit the very poorest people.

The view that the tax burden ought to fall is "a political, not economic, imperative," according to the report. It noted that Tony Blair had spoken of the need to "eliminate the social stigma of welfare dependency".

A separate report from the Employment Policy Institute concluded there had been merit in the Conservatives' policies to make the jobs market more flexible but said Britain was still unable to sustain full employment without triggering inflation.

Without a fresh approach to the people at the bottom end of the economic gain, it argued. With nearly one in five non-pensioner households having nobody in work, cheap solutions would only create more incentives for crime and anti-social behaviour.

Both reports catalogue the grim extent of low income and insecurity. The proportion of the population living in poverty has climbed from 9 per cent in 1979 to 25 per cent in 1993/94, according to the CPAG. In the same year nearly a third of households had at least one person claiming an income-related benefit. Privatisation and changes in education and housing policy, with tax and benefit changes, have tended to increase inequality.

According to the EPI, one in five families with children has no member in work. There are 840,000 people who have been unemployed and looking for work for more than a year.

Its report praised the Labour and Liberal Democrat manifestos for proposals to retrain the unemployed and improve work incentives. But it warned that too high a minimum wage would harm the very people it was supposed to help. Above £3.75 an hour it would cost jobs, while below that it would do little to increase incomes or work incentives for the working poor.

In addition, the EPI warned that the Conservatives' policy of long-term unemployment and poverty. An effective welfare-to-work package would end up costing far more than either Labour or the Lib Dems were suggesting.



Unconvinced: Paddy Ashdown in discussion with Euro-sceptic locals at the cattle-market in Hatherleigh, Devon

Photograph: John Voos

Farmyard bleatings sour Ashdown circle

Barrie Clement on Devon's rustic welcome for a pro-European

Never work with children or animals. Paddy Ashdown clearly refuses to accept the dictum.

Last week, at a farm in the Scottish Borders, he was persuaded to make sheep noises to make a lamb feel at ease.

Undaunted by the sarcasm that this provoked, he attempted yesterday to hold forth on the subject of Europe in the middle of a cattle market at Hatherleigh in Devon.

The Europhobe farmers had doubtless enlisted the help of the local Liberal Democrat leader, by name, to heckle the party's enthusiastic for Europe. The seat is now being fought by John Burnett, who came a close second to Ms Nicholson last time. The Liberal Democrats would take the redrawn constituency on an estimated swing of 2.7 per cent. At the open circle Mr Ashdown was made aware of strong resistance to all things European.

The Euro-scepticism was not confined to the farming community. The Liberal Democrats are generally considered to have a large anti-Brussels contingent among those who vote for them.

And during yesterday's visit to the West Country, Mr Ashdown went to support Nick Harvey, the MP for North Devon, who is considered to have the most Europhobe notions in the parliamentary party, along with Liz Lynne, the MP for Rochdale.

In Hatherleigh the open circle seemed to be closed to at least two Europhobe farmers, one of whom was prevented from entering the discussion. As Mr Ashdown battled manfully against an inadequate public address system and strongly Europhobe cattle, a rubicund Bernard Parkhouse declared his bitter opposition to Brussels.

In stage whispers Mr Parkhouse, a 76-year-old farmer, said: "What is the point in taxpayers paying the salaries of all those MPs if we are ruled from Europe?"

Accosted by Mr Parkhouse, the Liberal Democrat leader promised to get back to him at the end of the meeting. But he over did.

Said Mr Parkhouse: "He wouldn't let me speak with him [sic]." Mr Harvey voted against Maastricht in the House of Commons and yesterday confirmed his opposition to the single European currency, even though his leader and his party are well disposed towards it provided it is endorsed in a national referendum.

Together with Ms Lynne, Mr Harvey has had the distinction of endorsement by the virulently anti-European Referendum Party.

Sir James Goldsmith, the party leader, has decided not to put up a candidate against Mr Harvey and suggested that electors in the north Devon constituency should vote Liberal Democrat.

Mr Parkhouse, the MP for North Devon, who is considered to have the most Europhobe notions in the parliamentary party, along with Liz Lynne, the MP for Rochdale.

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by Aanonymous

I was Nipper's day out. He'd done an eight-day stint in headquarters, picking up on enemy releases and rebutting them, so that his large ears were beetroot red from the telephone. You could get sick of calling up overpaid, lazy hacks (many of them viciously hostile in the first place), and trying to convince them that privatisation was not an issue, but that education was. So today, for a treat, he would be back with the Candidate's tour.

Nipper could still get exasperated with the piranhas because they patronised him for his youth. He was young, true, one of the first of the so-called infant prodigies, who oozed cropped up in all areas of the party apparatus. Prodigies go-phered for Friend Bobby in HQ, researched endogenous growth theory for Mr Brown and directed policy for the Candidate himself. Wherever you looked, prodigies ran things. Nipper worked on the press side with Big Al. Al did the important briefings and some of the biggest one-to-ones. The rest Nipper nipped in and did. And at first it had been very hard, not being Al.

They were very different. No one could call Al - an old hack himself - an intellectual without running the risk of being hit. Nipper was a Balliol First in politics, philosophy and economics - in politics, philosophy and economics - and had spent the early part of his short career barely suppressing his contempt for the stupidity of the lobby correspondents. This was not, he had learned, something that they had responded to well.

The struggle had been short and he had adjusted. Now his ginger hair, long sideburns and rodentine features no longer caused a groan of dislike to emerge from whichever Westminster press office he entered. The piranhas knew that this was his master's voice, unvarnished and straightforward. They

could listen or not. He for his part still disliked them.

Standing at the back of the morning press conference, before the buses started for the south coast, Nipper watched the Candidate along with Mr Brown and the man they called Blind Lemon Blunkett (because of the way he sang political soul) file into the packed room. Two weeks ago when all this had started, the Candidate had been very nervous. He had sweated a lot, fluffed his lines, his an-

there joking, his arm round Blind Lemon's shoulders as they shared some comradely joke.

Mr Brown, though, did not seem quite so happy. He was pale and edgy beneath his dark hair, looking round the room nervously to try to gauge the mood in the tank. Were they hungry? And if so, who would they eat? And there was something more. Nipper's analysis was that the happier the Candidate, the more difficult it was to be Mr Brown, who might so easily have been leader himself. As his boss skipped through the questions, answering some, giving acceptable evasions to others, Mr Brown's lips moved almost imperceptibly, his body shifting in its seat, as he mentally supplied the great replies that he was over going to give. He's a big beast, thought Nipper, and not easily tamed.

Nipper did not get on to the Candidate's bus at first, but sat with the back pack, dabbling his toes in the warm little pool of gossip that they created everywhere they went. The Grey Man had said this, Dr Mawfing had said that, of Wild Eyes had been let loose on a pavement full of brother journalists and said the other; all communicated instantly by mobile phone and were supplemented by the mobile phones of others.

In Sussex's Newtown the pensioners gave the Candidate a good clap and pronounced him a nice boy. Even the *Socialist Worker* seller standing next to him smiled in the sunshine and muttered a friendly "piss off" into his beard. An hour later a demonstration at the university consisted of a pretty purple and skyblue banner and two placards politely requesting that respect be shown to wildlife. Nipper was on hand when one of the protesters singled out a camera crew. "Hey!" said the boy, "need any pre-senters? I'd be dead good." Nipper smiled. His view entirely.

He only ever got shit on his shoes once; after that he knew where to walk

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The best education money can buy for Cabinet members' children



Michael Heseltine (Deputy Prime Minister): Son Rupert and daughters Annabel and Alexandra all went to independent schools. Annabel was a boarder at Cobham Hall School, Kent. Fees: £4,500 per term boarding. Constituency comprehensive: Gillot's School, Henley - 3rd in the league table of Oxfordshire state secondaries.



John Major (Prime Minister): Both son James and daughter Elizabeth went to Kimbolton independent school in Cambridgeshire. Fees: £2,995 a term boarding. Constituency comprehensive: Finchbrooks School, Huntingdon.



Kenneth Clarke (Chancellor): Son went to King Edward's School for Boys in Birmingham; daughter went to King Edward VI High School for Girls in Birmingham, both independent. Fees: Both £1,500 per term (day only). Local comprehensive: Rushcliffe Comprehensive School, West Bridgford.



Malcolm Rifkind (Foreign Secretary): Son and daughter were both educated privately, daughter at George Watson's College, Edinburgh and son at Loretto School, Musselburgh, near Edinburgh. Fees: George Watson's £2,760 per term boarding; Loretto £3,670 per term. Local comprehensive: Craigmount High.



Stephen Dorrell (Health): Son attends the same public school as his father - Uppingham School in Leicestershire. Fees: £4,440 per-term boarding. Local comprehensive for constituency: Uppingham Community College, Uppingham.



Michael Howard (Home Secretary): Nicholas went to Eton and daughter Catherine went to St Paul's Girls' School in London. Fees: Eton - £4,470 per term boarding; St Paul's Girls' - £2,209 day. Constituency state school: The Harver Grammar School, Folkestone.



Lord Mackay of Clashfern (Lord Chancellor): Son went to Edinburgh Academy, daughter to St Margaret's School, Edinburgh, both independent. Fees: Academy - £3,765 per-term boarding; St Margaret's - £2,885 per-term boarding. Local comprehensive: Craigmount High, Edinburgh.



Sir Nicholas Lyell (Attorney General): Sons went to Harrow and Stowe, daughters to St Albans High School for Girls, Abbot's Hill and Stowe. All independent. Fees: Harrow - £4,610 per term; Stowe - £4,500 per-term; St Albans - £1,605 per-term day; Abbot's Hill - £3,670 per-term boarding. Constituency comprehensive: Mark Rutherford Upper School, Bedford.



Virginia Bottomley (Secretary of State for National Heritage): Daughter Adela went to King's School in Canterbury, Kent. Fees: £4,480 per-term boarding. Constituency comprehensive: George Abbot School, Guildford.



Douglas Hogg (Minister for Agriculture): Son Quintin went to Eton. Fees: £4,470 per term. Local comprehensive for constituency: North Kesteven GM School, North Hykeham.



Sir Patrick Mayhew (Northern Ireland): Sons Barnabas, Henry, Tristan and Jerome all went to their father's former school, Tunbridge School in Kent. Fees: £4,323 per-term boarding. Local state schools: Tunbridge Wells Girls' and Boys' Grammars, Tunbridge Wells.

Heseltine seeks state schools fit for Tories

Fran Abrams, Lucy Ward and Job Rabkin

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday suggested that the state education system would soon be good enough to educate Tory ministers' children.

Only three members of the Cabinet sent their children to state schools, a survey by *The Independent* has revealed. The rest spent a combined total running into millions of pounds on an education in the independent sector.

The Alma Mater of Cabinet ministers' children include most of the country's most famous public schools. Eton, Harrow, and Stowe are among them, along with a number of other leading boarding and day schools. Boarding school fees now come to more than £12,000 per year in the most well-known schools.

Asked when the state system would become so good that the Cabinet's children would no longer go private, Mr Heseltine said that in future all schools

would have to comply with national targets.

"The important thing now is that we are setting targets nationally for this country to be at the top of world education levels and we are expecting all schools to publish their own targets," he said.

Mr Heseltine also attacked the Labour leader, who went to Fettes independent school in Edinburgh, saying that he did not understand the state education system. Tony Blair was guilty of "hypocrisy" over his decision to send his sons to The Oratory, a grant-maintained school in West London, rather than to a local school near his home in Islington.

He went on to claim that Britain's education authorities were run by Labour, and that that was the reason for low standards.

"For the Labour Party to be talking about standards in education splits in the wind of what Labour actually does in education," he said.

To the suggestion that he too was the product of public

schooling, at Shrewsbury, the Deputy Prime Minister said: "I am not a hypocrite. I don't proclaim a set of policies for my children which I would deny to other children. That is the essence."

Later, the Prime Minister added a further attack, accusing Labour of a "stomachless contempt with hypocrisy."

Mr Blair defended himself: "I know that they believe that this is the right strategy for them but I think they are turning people away from the Conservative Party by this type of personalised abuse," he said.

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said: "I am not going to indulge in scurrilous personalised attacks on individual ministers, but it is hardly surprising that the Tories aren't interested in raising standards for all our children."

"The fact is that hardly any senior Tories have had the same experience of state schools as the vast majority of families in Britain."

The *Independent's* survey of where the Cabinet sent their



Paying their way: Kimbolton School, Cambridgeshire, where the Prime Minister's children were educated. Fees for boarders are £2,995 a term

children to school revealed that the Secretary of State for Transport, Sir George Young, sent Gerry, Hugo, Sophia and Camilla to Furze Platt school in Maidenhead, Berkshire, and Tony Newton, the Leader of the

House, sent Polly and Jessica to King Edward's High School for Girls in Chelmsford, Essex. Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, had step-children who attended state schools, but the rest of the

Cabinet used the independent sector.

Mr Heseltine's children went to boarding schools, with his daughter Annabel attending Cobham Hall School in Kent. The family's local comprehensive

Gillot's School in Henley upon Thames, has the third best GCSE results in Oxfordshire.

Last night Janet Matthews, the chair of the South Oxfordshire Fight Against Cuts in Education and agent for Labour's

candidate in Henley, said the group had repeatedly asked Mr Heseltine to come to a meeting to discuss the implications of opting out in the area. He had refused either to do so or to send a representative, she said.

Vote from the classroom goes to the party offering hard cash

Jamie Gardner, 18, is taking A-levels this summer in English, geography and history at Oakbank Grant Maintained School in Keighley, West Yorkshire, and a first-time voter.

As a student at a grant-maintained school, I see education as an important election issue since GM status, created by the Conservatives, is a contentious policy area. The benefits to our school as a result of obtaining GM status are many, thanks to funding we would not previously have had. The school environment has improved as we have been able to employ outdoor staff, new classrooms and a common room have been built and there are more teachers, better catering and more money spent on books.

The voter has to be a pragmatist and assess which party is going to give them what they want, so comparing the three parties' policies concerning GM schools is a very influential factor in the location of my cross. The Conservatives would appear to be offering what the Liberal Democrats and Labour are not - a continuation of GM schools.

The dilemma here is that I can see no

way in which the Conservatives will be able centrally to fund any more GM schools as they bow at the altar of unchanged income tax. I am also opposed to the performance tables as they encourage an unfair system where certain schools are overcrowded while others are under-populated.

Labour are opposed to GM schools (despite all the hullabaloo that this created) yet their plans for foundation schools are not in my mind radically different from the grant-maintained ethos anyway... Labour is hoping to increase spending without increasing taxes. Their idea of abolishing the assisted-places scheme to raise money seems unfair on students of grammar-school calibre who simply could not afford to go to a selective private school. The Liberal Democrats are the only ones to make a concrete spending promise (the policy which most appeals to me), but sadly they are also vehemently opposed to GM schools.

At this stage, the Lib-Dems' promises of increased public spending from a definite source will, I think, sway me towards them.

Mhairi McDonald, 17, is studying for A-levels in psychology, media studies and photography at Derby Tertiary College, Wilmorton.

I think Labour and the Liberal Democrats are right to emphasise the importance of keeping class sizes small, but I am undecided over which party's ideas for funding it are better. The Lib-Dems' promise of more tax to cut primary class sizes, provide more books and repairing schools is appealing - every parent wants their child in a safe environment with good resources.

In principle, I support the idea of more tax - a penny in the pound sounds very little and I think people are more understanding about paying if they know where the money is going. Even so, people still don't want to part with their hard-earned cash.

As far as nursery vouchers are concerned, I think the parties should stop arguing about whether to have them or not. The important thing, I believe, is to provide education for four-year-olds and the necessary facilities. It seems to me that vouchers could be a way of increasing nursery education in areas of

the country where there is not much available.

I am worried about the idea of too much variation between schools because of the danger of making education difficult for children who move schools. My family moved from Scotland to Germany and then to Derby, but I was able to stay in the same type of school - a state comprehensive. I can see the advantages of specialist schools which both the Conservatives and Labour want to promote, and I'm sure specialised equipment and expert training are useful in making Britain more competitive. However, I think it is too early to decide whether a child should specialise. It would be better to create specialist sixth forms or colleges so students could choose at 16.

As a college student, I wish the political parties could all take more notice of further education. I understand that schools will always be at the top of politicians' agendas, but they could at least understand a bit more about how colleges work. I also think there could be more serious discussion of the political issues by all the parties, rather than just slugging each other off all the time.

Neil Lee and Matthew Goodworth, both 17, are studying A-levels at the Cherwell School, Oxford.

We see education as a great issue of importance not only to ourselves but to future generations and Britain as a whole. During this election, education has already been proven to be a critical issue and politicians ignore it at their peril.

Having lived all our lives under a Conservative government which seems to place little importance on education, we have become accustomed to cuts in our school budget and understaffing which can lead to disciplinary problems and a poor understanding of many subjects - it takes an exceptional teacher to get the best out of a class of more than 30.

Education is pivotal in maintaining reasonable wage levels in this country, that much we have learnt, because it enables us to compete on the world stage with a skilled workforce, innovation and scientific achievement rather than low wages, but the Government still seems to ignore this. Only the Liberal Democrats seem to have grasped the concept of taxation - that is, it should be set at reasonable levels in order to pay for

the upkeep of a good education system.

Although the number of university places has increased, the amount of people who can afford to live while at university has decreased because of the increased cost of living and the reduced number of grants given by the Government to those who apply, leaving a privileged few only.

We do not believe in selection, it creates an underclass by splitting them in all subjects. Streaming should only be allowed in individual subjects in order for people to develop their skills at a pace suitable to themselves. Smaller class sizes would also allow this to occur, due to an increase in the amount of teacher-pupil interaction, letting pupils have the necessary help when and how they need it. We feel the national curriculum is far too rigid and does not give teachers the flexibility they need to effectively teach their subjects.

For all our criticisms, we must admit that the state education system has done well, especially for those of us privileged to go to some of the excellent schools which do exist. With the help of the next government perhaps more schools can reach the standards of the best.



'I've never lost that feeling of hope in Labour'

How will you vote?

Really, I'm torn. I've always voted Labour, but I have more friends in the Liberal Democrats, and am more inclined to the Liberal Democrats right now.

There seem to be at least two Conservative parties right now, and there appear to be two Labour parties, although that crack is being papered over. I'm not so sure that my heart is out with the Liberal Democrats, but I have a feeling that my feet will take me into the booth to vote

Labour. I must say, I like the Liberal Democrats - the ones I've met, Kennedy and Ashdown, they're really nice people. They seem decent people. Iben said "the minority is always right", and I think there's something in that. The Conservatives are looking like a load of squabbling schoolkids. Nobody in their right mind, I don't think, could vote for them. They're like a bunch of puppies that you've spilled out on to the floor, and they're all going on scrapping with each other.

HOW I WILL VOTE: BARRY TOOK

There's no rhyme or reason... I just think they're a load of rubbish. I think Anasim Bovan was rather generous to them, calling them lower than vermin.

And the Labour Party is all promise, but they're so concentrated on the middle, they've left the left behind, which is a shame. Obviously, the old Labour party is still there. I have great sympathy with them, because I grew up at a time when

I first remember the 1945 election. I wasn't old enough to vote, but it was such an exciting time.

We did really feel that the future was there, and it was going to be great. And I've never lost that feeling that there's hope in the Labour Party, there's always hope in the Labour Party.

Will your decision be affected by the fact that the Liberals

are not going to get enough votes to be the majority party?

No, a vote for them is not a wasted vote. They're nice people, they're good people, and they deserve backing. And in areas that were Conservative but don't feel inclined to go that way any more, I think a Liberal Democrat vote will be a very useful one. But in the long run, I know a government can only be

formed by the Labour Party or the Conservative Party. I hope to God it's Labour.

Are there policy issues which you are particularly concerned about?

I'm all for going for Europe now, which strengthens my Ashdown-Blair plans. Overall, I think the country's in a thorough mess; a cult of greed has taken the whole thing over. We've got to reapportion resources to the people that actually need them. The Liberals

have always been honest about their intentions of raising money for specific purposes.

Add in local government, they're the second largest party in the country, which is really important.

So you're more likely to be voting Liberal Democrat?

Well, I'm keeping my options open. I'll just say that they are my friends, but I feel that a Labour victory would be the best thing for the country.

Interview by Ben Summers

مكتبة من الأصل

Blair 'cannot count on Scots or Welsh'

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

A Labour government could not count on support from the Scottish or Welsh nationalist parties unless it offered a referendum on their independence from England, the parties' leaders warned yesterday.

Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish Nationalist Party, and

Dafydd Wigley, leader of Plaid Cymru, both attacked Tony Blair at a press conference in London and said that if he wanted their backing he would have to offer them a referendum on their independence from England.

Both men said they still described themselves as Socialists and attacked new Labour for its drift to the right.

Mr Salmond said the Scottish people would want to know

whether a Labour referendum was on a Scottish parliament or on the "English parish council" which Mr Blair had said was similar to his idea of the assembly.

"Any consultative referendum in Scotland should have independence on the ballot paper along with devolution and the other option of doing nothing at all," he said.

Mr Wigley added that Plaid

Cymru would not give unconditional backing to a Labour government. "If they want our support they have to earn it and they have to do that by giving Wales the full referendum which so far they haven't been prepared to do," he said.

The two party leaders called their press conference to protest at Labour's position on tax and spending. Mr Salmond said he

believed Scottish people earning more than £26,000 per year would be prepared to pay more tax to avoid "having to step over their fellow Scots" living on the streets of major cities.

Mr Salmond also said recent comments by Margaret Thatcher appearing to welcome Mr Blair's reforms of the Labour party were not to be welcomed.

A new Labour leader who

backs the policies of Margaret Thatcher and who is pursuing a political love affair with the past Conservative prime minister is going to find a very frosty reception in the politics of Scotland and Wales," he said.

Mr Salmond added that he had hopes that his mother Mary, who had voted Conservative since 1945, might vote for his party on 1 May.

The turning point seemed to have been the £475,000-a-year salary paid to former British Gas chief executive Cedric Brown - the "biggest fat cat of them all", he said.

"As a small gas shareholder, that example of corporate greed was the final straw for me," he said.

"People across the political spectrum in Scotland, including

my mother, who has been voting Tory since 1945, believe that Cedric Brown should be contributing a bit more to help fund health, education and housing."

Mr Salmond said that he had been encouraged when, at the last local elections, his mother had asked for a postal vote and had told him: "You'll be all right this time!"

Mission impossible for woman who keeps the blue flag flying

Kathy Marks

For a woman faced with a task akin to the uphill struggle of Sisyphus, Lizzie Pitman is remarkably cheerful.

This fresh-faced 29-year-old is the Conservative candidate in Sedgefield, a rural constituency in County Durham. The sitting MP there not only has a majority of nearly 15,000, but is likely to be the next prime minister.

When Mrs Pitman talks of wrestling the seat from Tony Blair, the words "cat" and "hell" spring to mind. Yet despite the odds, and the odds yesterday that her election agent had broken his ankle, she refuses to be downhearted.

"You'd be surprised how many Conservatives there are round here," she said, canvassing in the village of Heighington with a spring in her step. "We're keeping the flag flying."

They love Lizzie Pitman in Heighington, with its village green and pretty Georgian houses. It is one of a few scattered pockets of Tory support within a constituency composed largely of ravaged former mining towns.

On the streets, elderly women embrace her warmly. "We wish you all the best, dear,

you're absolutely marvellous," said one. "And you never know, pigs might fly."

Labour activists in Sedgefield have poked fun at Mrs Pitman's designer clothes and blue-chip background. She is a niece of the Earl of Gainsborough, comes from a landed Cotswolds family, and recently married a former Household Cavalry officer. A devout Roman Catholic, she accompanies pilgrimages to Lourdes.

Mrs Pitman was selected as a candidate at the first attempt - the cause of much rejoicing at Central Office, where she was the preferred choice to oppose the Labour leader in this David and Goliath contest.

Her elfin good looks and aristocratic connections have since made her the darling of the gossip columns. "Our undisputed Tory pin-up," one diarist called her. "Very embarrassing," she says, looking up from under her long eyelashes.

But Mrs Pitman is no dizzy ingénue. She is an articulate and determined woman with a philosophy degree who spent two years in the psychology unit at Wormwood Scrubs prison. She has also worked as a political researcher, for Conservative MP Peter Thurnham and Labour's Kevin McNamara.

A former Labour supporter,



Hard labour: Lizzie Pitman - Tony Blair's opponent in the Sedgefield constituency - campaigning in the village of Heighington yesterday

Photograph: Tom Pilton

she underwent her conversion on the road to Damascus in Mr McNamara's office. "I realised that there's no point in appearing to be compassionate if you can't deliver the practical results," she says briskly. Mr McNamara is said to have told a

Tory MP: "She's far too good for your party."

Mrs Pitman describes herself as "too the sensible wing" of the Conservatives. She is "pro-Life", pro-Europe and pro-field sports.

She adores John Major and

agrees with Michael Howard's tough sentencing policies. "The terrible thing about the Conservative Party is that it doesn't matter where you come from, but where you're going to," she says.

The charge that she knows

nothing of social hardship in the North-east is not really fair. After all, Tony Blair - despite acquiring a house in the former colliery village of Trindoo and listing membership of three working men's clubs in *Who's Who* - is hardly a member of the

cloth cap and whippet brigade either. Mrs Pitman refuses to talk about defeat. "That's not a word that I want to hear in the middle of an election campaign," she says, although she later concedes: "It's hard work, there's no point in pretending."

Her next stah at Westminster - her admirers hope - will be in a more winnable seat. In the meantime, her high profile as Mr Blair's challenger does her political career no harm and assures her of a place in the history books, if only as a footnote.

QUOTES OF THE DAY

The Liberal Democrats are, as they have always been, handmaidens of socialism - **Malcolm Rifkind**

A very heavy loose cannon on the deck of a sinking ship - **Emma Nicholson talking about Dame Angela Rumbold**

If Mr Bell is trying to turn his campaign into an extension of the *Guardian* smear campaign against me, then what he is doing is prostituting himself. He is wrecking the election for all other candidates - **Neil Hamilton**

John Prescott has made one of the single most damaging admissions of this election so far, admitting off-the-cuff and off-the-record that a minimum wage would mean higher unemployment - **Michael Heseltine**

Wait-and-see must inevitably involve an acceptance that if the conditions are right we might join, meanwhile half of the party... are saying under no circumstances will we join - **Menzies Campbell**

It's a bit odd if policy is being made by candidates now and not by the people I thought were responsible for policy, which was the Prime Minister and the Cabinet - **Edwina Currie**

I'll tell you what I'm going to do for the British rock music - I'm never going to play in a band again - **Tony Blair talking about his future in the pop music industry**

Compiled by Sam Costes

John Walsh relishes his first journey on the Labour leader's cavalcade

Blair basks in the sunshine of approval

"Sun's out," said Tony Blair, squinting into the unseasonal rays. "Couple of weeks, Tories'll be out as well."

Mr Blair was not, of course, wearing sunglasses, since they're considered bad for Labour's image ("They don't want him looking like General Jaruzelski," a woman explained). But he was affecting, if only for this morning, a coarsened, I'm-talking-to-a-taxi-driver variant of his usual clipped RP, the better to woo the citizens of Crawley.

The former, a marginal constituency, with its featureless shopping centre, its "Living" superstore and its recent crime wave scenes an unlikely fiefdom for Nicholas Soames, the portly endomorph who once suggested the Princess of Wales needed psychiatric help. Crawley isn't mad about him.

"E's a tart," said Mick, a local bruiser with weapons-grade halitosis. "E spends all 'is time

in 'orsham," - where, indeed, he is shifting his tents for the next election - "and 'e might just as well, cos 'e's done nothing for Crawley."

Dissatisfaction and a desire for change was in the air, though from which direction none could tell. A venerable Sikh, his long beard knotted at the end as though he were the victim of a practical joke, complained that none of the parties was doing anything "for the betterment of the layman".

Only through the good offices of the local Labour candidate, Laura Moffatt, people said, had the local hospital kept its casualty department open.

But when the big grey bus with the sexy smoked windows had drawn up as part of a tour of Sussex, which included Brighton, Mr Blair had basked in his role as bringer of good news.

They loved him, with or without the Essex delivery.



Frying game: Tony Blair in a fish and chip shop in Brighton yesterday. He also visited Crawley as part of a campaign tour through Sussex

Photograph: Reuters

"Only a couple of weeks in go," he assured them, and they could start putting young people in work, robbers out of work and make the blind see and the lame walk.

He surveyed the sea of Sussex crumblies before him. "And I think we should do something for our pensioners as well, don't you?" Yes, they jolly well did. "We'll stop this VAT on fuel, for a start..." Like the most shameless trouper he was giving his audience what they wanted. What would come next? Subsidised Saga holidays?

Tony descended, linked up with Cherie, and went walk-

about. The crowd formed a square round him like a little paddock, around which he strolled and autographed and laughed and joshed, a thoughtless schmoozer.

"You said nothing about Europe," Tony, said a man. "Do you think the people of Crawley don't want to hear about Europe?" Tony glanced up. "We've made it very clear that we support a referendum on Europe," he said, as he'd been saying for weeks.

After a while you long for a different, original, unregimented reply.

Instead, you get jinky

moments. "Tiny, what are you going to do for British rock music?" asked a 22-year-old groover. "I'll tell you what I'm going to do," grated Blair, "I'm never going to play in a rock band again."

And then a small voice asked: "Tony, are you going to be our Prime Minister?" Assuming he had encountered the Crawley village idiot, Blair grinned. "That's the general idea. But will you be the prime minister under a Federal Europe?" Blair was nonplussed. "Look," he said, "I don't intend to be in a federal Europe." Good God, we thought, a real answer at last.

Figures suggest many expatriate British scientists will be watching for news from their homeland in the next 15 days. The Royal Society has found that the number of its members - typically top scientists - living abroad has risen to 24 per cent, compared with 17 per cent in 1970 and less than 20 per cent in 1980.

Separate figures from universities show that in 1994, 5.3 per cent of science and technology postgraduates left Britain after getting their higher degree, compared with only 1 per cent of other graduates.

Among the names put on show by Labour were Paul Davies, the top cosmologist who emigrated to Australia in 1990, "largely out of disillusionment with government pol-

Labour plans foundation to reverse the 'brain drain'

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, claimed bravely yesterday that Labour "will turn the brain drain into a brain gain, as scientists tell us they are coming home to Britain."

The party produced a list of 21 leading scientists who have left the country, but back the party's policies. However, Adam Ingram, Labour's science minister, was quickly forced to admit that he knew of no scientist who would definitely book a 2 May flight back if Labour wins. But he put this down to scientists' careful nature.

"They're people who always test something out on the basis of the evidence available," he said. "They're predicting change, but will want to test it."

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Separate figures from universities show that in 1994, 5.3 per cent of science and technology postgraduates left Britain after getting their higher degree, compared with only 1 per cent of other graduates. Among the names put on show by Labour were Paul Davies, the top cosmologist who emigrated to Australia in 1990, "largely out of disillusionment with government pol-

icy"; Nobel prizewinner Sir Harold Kroto whose award-winning work was carried out in the US; Ron James of PPL, the company which jointly produced Dolly the cloned sheep; and Professor Michael Duff, now a Distinguished Professor at Texas A&M University.

Professor Davies said, "I am sure that should Labour have a chance to put their ideas into practice, we will certainly see some scientists coming home." Mr Brown also emphasised that scientists and would-be inventors could benefit from the party's plan for an independent charity, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta), in which they could donate patents and copyrights of their inventions and discoveries, so that future royalties could fund start-up projects.

But the Nesta proposal was criticised by John Mulvey, of the independent pressure group Save British Science, who said that it would require a change in research funding systems to work.

"It's a worthy idea, but a worrying development under the very mean funding regime is that universities and scientists are obliged in patent their work so that some money returns to the universities. That's almost the expectation under the present regime. "I think that unless funding for 'blue skies' [undirected] research is more adequately available, then universities and individuals will find it harder to hand over their patents to a trust."

China in rage over human rights vote

Teresa Poole
Peking

Given any excuse, China will lambast the United States for trying to link human rights with trade issues. But Peking has proved to be a master at using an economic carrot and stick to escape censure on its human rights record.

Yesterday, diplomatic punishment was meted out to Denmark and the Netherlands for their role in sponsoring and backing a motion at the United Nations Human Rights Commission on Human Rights which was highly critical of China. The resolution was due to come up for a vote in Geneva last night with China already on track for a diplomatic triumph, as lack of international support left the motion doomed.

In Peking, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, Shen Guofang, said China was suspending important official visits with Denmark, and postponing a Dutch trade mission due in June, headed by the economic affairs minister, Hans Wijers. Denmark as is always the case in such situations, stands accused of "interfering in China's internal affairs and hurting the feelings of the Chinese people," said Mr Shen.

More ominously for Copenhagen was the announcement that "Sino-Danish relations have been damaged". Danish companies now their contract negotiation will be moved to the slow lane, trade and economic relations will be put on the back-burner, and they, like business executives from other countries, which have caused Peking's ire, will have to wait for the ill winds to blow over.

It was France's decision to break the European Union's previous consensus on backing the motion which set the ball

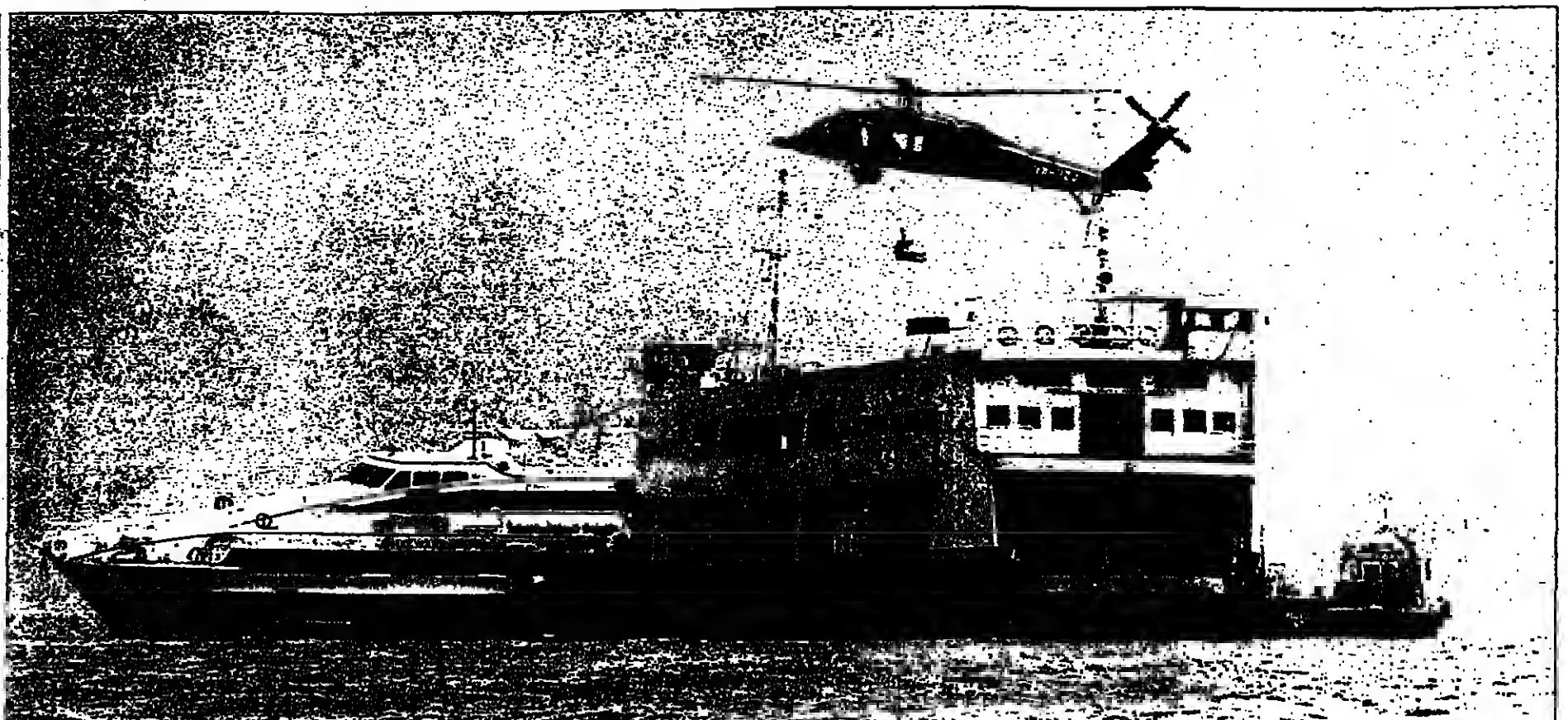
rolling. That was seen as linked to next month's visit to Peking by President Jacques Chirac, who is hoping to sign a few more Airbus orders. Canada, similarly, backed away.

Only once since the 1989 Tiananmen killings has China failed to block the motion from reaching an actual vote. This year, like last, it fell at the preliminary hurdle because of China's "no-action" motion. The reason, as given by France, Canada and a host of other countries, is that they have been persuaded by Peking's argument that such motions have a detrimental effect on human rights dialogue, compared with engagement.

Such a viewpoint is worth a proper debate. But the behind-the-scenes discussions at Geneva are far more down to earth.

Xiao Qiang, director of the pressure group, Human Rights in China, said this week that the annual debate was more of a political game than a real argument over human rights. Meanwhile, the African and Latin American countries on whose support China has always relied have been trading their votes for the most financial support they can get. "They are trying to get the best offer out of Peking," said Mr Xiao. After this year, barring any 1989-style massacre, the annual vote is likely to be dead in the water. China has a very wide definition of what it is to be bullied by the West, and its tactics have worked.

Geneva (AP) - Condemning imprisonment and executions of government opponents, the U.N. Human Rights Commission overcame African opposition and voted to put Nigeria under special scrutiny. As a result of the decision, the UN will, for the first time, appoint an investigator on Nigeria.



Air aid: A helicopter helps in a rescue operation after a high-speed catamaran collided with a car ferry in Hong Kong waters yesterday, injuring 27

Photograph: Reuters

Canada withdraws from key censure role

Hugh Winsor
Ottawa

Canada has softened its policy towards human rights abuses in China in a move linked to trade and immigration.

Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced on Monday that Canada was withdrawing its co-sponsorship of a resolution to the United Nations Human Rights Commission condemning human rights abuses in China.

Every year since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, the European Union has sponsored the resolution and every year until now, Canada has been a co-sponsor. Canada has made the change despite heavy lobbying from the British government and from the United States, where President Bill Clinton raised the issue with Prime Minister Jean Chretien during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington last week.

Mr Axworthy said Canada remains concerned about human rights in China but "under the circumstances, we concluded that Canada could have a greater influence on the state

of human rights in China by pursuing and intensifying our promising bilateral measures."

The minister also said the resolution doesn't have the clout it once had because several of the other traditional sponsors, including France (which has just concluded a major deal to sell Airbus aircraft to China), have

also backed away. Other countries to have withdrawn sponsorship include Italy, Greece, Germany, Spain and Australia. The fracturing of the earlier consensus is seen as a major success for Chinese diplomacy.

Although Mr Axworthy was stuck with defying the Canadian switch, he opposed it

strongly in Cabinet and the ensuing row was so serious that details of the secret proceedings leaked out last week.

Prime Minister Chretien was the principal proponent of the softer line on China, a view which appears directly related to the efforts both the Canadian Government and Canadian

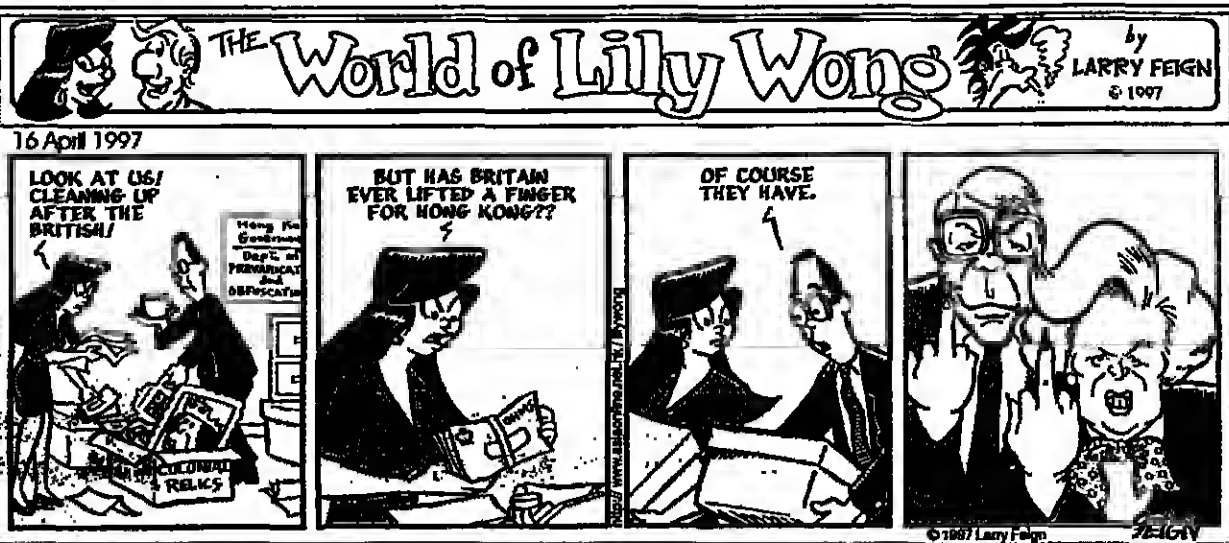
businesses have been making to capitalise on rapidly expanding commercial opportunities in China.

Ever the pragmatist, Mr Chretien has often indicated his scepticism about how much influence a small country like Canada can have on China. Mr Axworthy, backed by the For-

eign Affairs Department has been emphasizing the importance of keeping up the moral pressure, continuing a strong tradition of robustly moral Canadian diplomacy.

But Mr Chretien has also led two trade missions to China in the three-and-a-half years since he took power. One major success was the sale of two nuclear electrical generating stations to China with the prospect of several more. The Canadians are convinced the Chinese sales will reassert the Canadian CANDU system, which uses natural rather than enriched uranium to generate steam, as a superior nuclear system which does not run the risks of the Chernobyl or Three Mile Island types of meltdown.

Canadian engineering firms are involved in the design and construction of the huge Three Gorges dam, and Canadian exports in many fields have expanded. Canada also quietly hosted Lieutenant-General Qiao Shugen, the deputy chief of the general staff of the People's Liberation Army, and five other senior officers recently.



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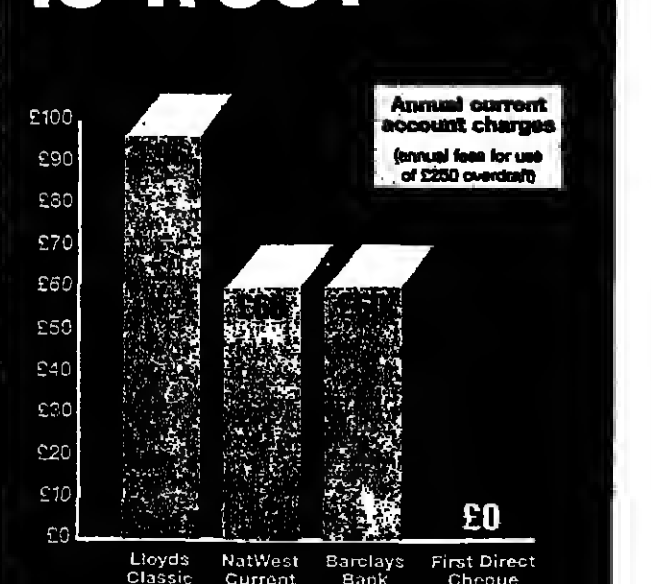
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international



Vigil: A boy standing near an Italian tank after it has disembarked yesterday at the Albanian port of Durres in the first contingent of the European multinational force sent to protect aid distribution in the troubled country

Photograph: Yannis Behrakis/Reuters

Troops may use force guarding Albania aid

Paris (Reuters) — Troops in a multinational force safeguarding aid to Albania can use weapons both for self-defence and if they believe public order is threatened, Charles Millon, the French Defence Minister said yesterday.

Mr Millon, outlining the role of 1,000 French troops in the Italian-led force of up to 6,000 personnel, said the force had a far broader mandate to use arms than that granted to United Nations peacekeepers during the Bosnian war.

He said the force, under the UN Security Council resolution, approving the operation last month, will be able to use arms if it is threatened or if it sees that public order is threatened.

About 1,200 Italian, French and Spanish troops arrived by air and sea in Albania yesterday to launch the multinational effort.

Mr Millon said the force was primarily intended to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches the needy in the former communist state and to ensure that other international organisations

can carry out their work in safety.

"This mission will have indirect consequences because it will allow the Albanian territory to be secured and thus permit Albanian security forces to re-establish order in their country," Mr Millon told parliament.

He said the mission was limited to three months and "does not have the objective of acting as a substitute for the Albanian police or army. This is neither a police mission, nor one to disarm people."

Hundreds of thousands of weapons were looted from military arsenals last month during widespread unrest. Much of the south of the country is in the hands of rebels demanding the resignation of President Sali Berisha, blamed for the collapse of get-rich-quick savings schemes at the root of the unrest in which more than 300 people have died.

Speaking in Rome, Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, applauded the efforts of the multi-

national force but stressed that the goals of the mission should remain humanitarian.

"I think the concept of the mission ... is the right approach to make sure that food gets into the hands of needy and not into the hands of outlaws," Mr Annan said after talks with the Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi.

Mr Annan said, however, that the multinational force had no mandate to disarm rebels and this should be done by the Albanian people themselves.

"Disarmament is a very tricky issue and should be an [Albanian] national effort ... possibly the government could buy back the weapons," he said. "This operation is a humanitarian one to make sure aid gets to the people."

Mr Prodi said the force would also have as its priority the smooth running of new general elections called by President Berisha for June, after rebels demanded his resignation over the savings fiasco.

Dutroux inquiry bungled by police

Katherine Butler

Belgium's anguish looks set to continue unabated. The Untouchables — the 15 members of parliament who have for the past six months conducted a public inquiry into the handling of the country's child sex and murder scandals — yesterday officially exposed the nation's police and judiciary as dysfunctional and guilty of gross incompetence.

They also hinted strongly that the failures of the investigations into the Dutroux cases which came to light last August, triggering not just revulsion but widespread unrest, may be linked to a high-level political cover-up. At least four children, victims of a sex abuse ring allegedly operated by Marc Dutroux who is now facing murder charges, might have been found alive if police and magistrates had done their jobs, the inquiry concluded.

Fouls and rivalry between the country's different police and judicial divisions prevented them from working together, the report said. Not only was there a "flagrant failure" to pass information between prosecutors and police but investigators ignored vital leads, used insufficient resources badly, and showed disdain for the families of the victims of missing children. The parents of nine-year-old Loulita Benabou abducted in 1992 and whose corpse was found underneath a Brussels petrol station last month were told to join the queues "as if they had come to report a missing handbag," the report said.

While most Belgians would not be surprised to learn that their police force is incompetent, the findings appear to bolster more grave suspicions of corruption and political interference. The committee "finds it difficult not to conclude ... that Dutroux and others might have received high level protection". The inquiry's report calls for the dismantling of the exist-

ing police and criminal justice structures, the establishment of a single federal police force and for police retraining. If acted on, the findings, to be debated by parliament today and tomorrow, could revolutionise the way Belgium is administered. Failure to heed them will almost certainly trigger unrest and could bring down Jean Luc Dehaene's Christian Democrat-led coalition government.

In September the committee is due to report on its findings on allegations that Dutroux and his associates enjoyed high-level protection and perhaps even the collaboration of a politically influenced judiciary.

Suspicion that corrupt politicians or magistrates shielded Dutroux emerged from evidence heard by the inquiry alleging that the convicted child rapist's close associate, Michel Nihoul, a Brussels businessman who allegedly organised orgies, had close contacts with police. It has also been established that the gendarmerie mounted a surveillance operation on Dutroux several years ago but failed to detect his activities. Police searched his home but failed to find eight-year-olds Julie Lejeune and Melissa Russo, despite an officer's reports of hearing children's voices.

Revelations about the authorities' handling of the paedophile scandals have incensed Belgians. Almost 300,000 took to the streets last October.

The victims' families have become heroic figures and their agitation for reform of the judicial and police system has spawned a grassroots movement known as "white committees". These committees are the focus for alliances between the parents, their supporters and workers from the Clabecq steelworks and Renault car plants who believe that unemployment and social ills are also a function of the corruption and nepotism which appear to permeate the political and legal establishment.

Tudjman lays claim to Croatian poll victory

Zagreb (AP) — President Franjo Tudjman's ruling nationalist party said yesterday that it expects to rule the capital following the weekend elections.

Minority Serbs in UN-administered eastern Slavonia voted for a third day in an election that was designed to oust them back into Croatia.

"The election results are proof of our might," Ivo Pasalic, leader of the ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), proclaimed yesterday.

Despite rising popular dissatisfaction with the ruling elite's wealth, the HDZ posted a convincing victory in Sunday's elections for municipal governments and the Chamber of Counties, the upper house.

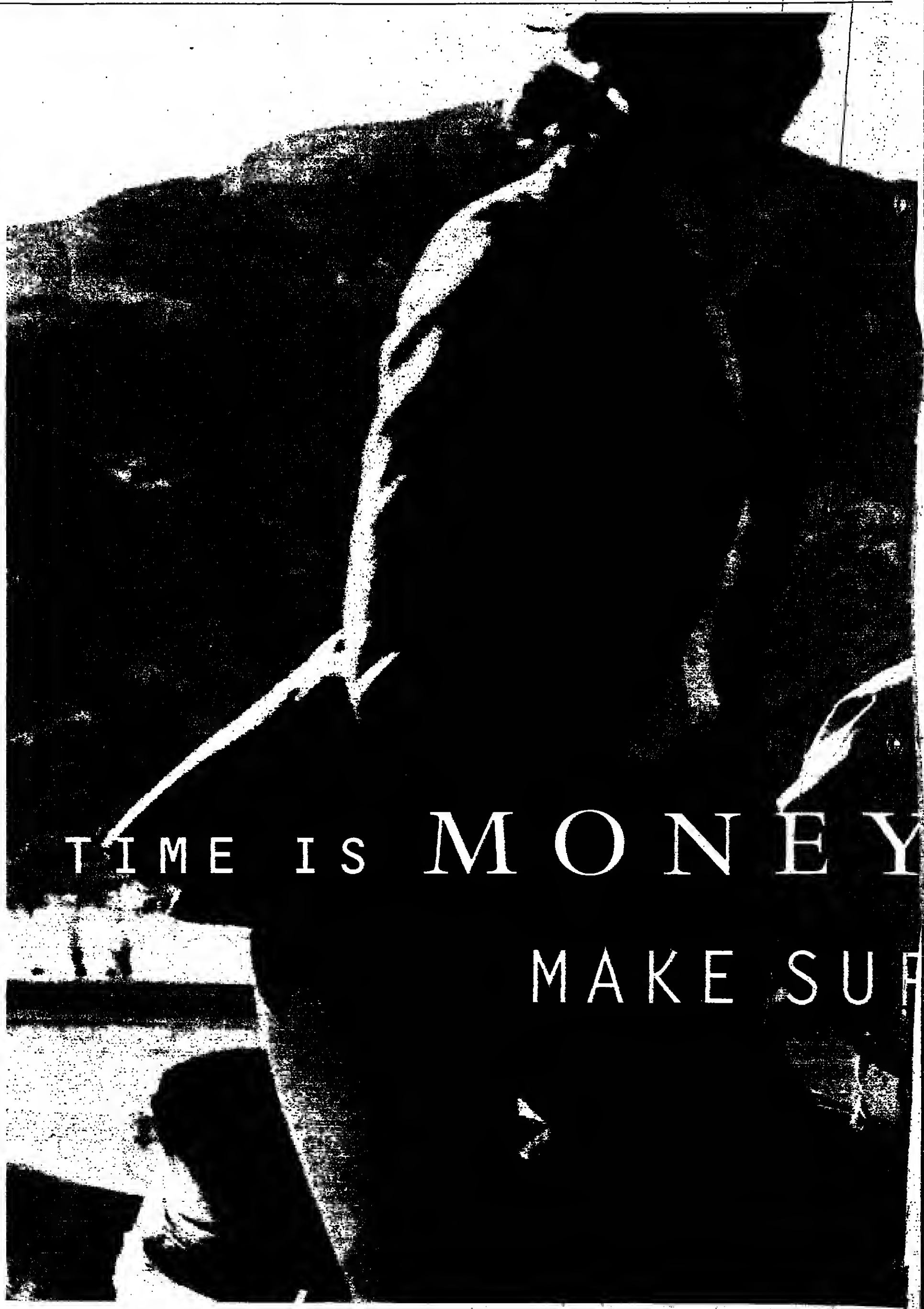
The HDZ's standing in Zagreb has improved and it may

even gain control, after refusing for 18 months to accept the opposition victory in the last elections in October 1995.

Winning 35 per cent of the city council vote, the HDZ took 24 seats — the biggest fraction in the 50-seat local legislature. The Social Democrats, former communists, took 24 per cent, and the centrist Social Liberals 12.57 per cent.

In Split, Croatia's second-biggest city, the results gave the opposition a chance to dump the HDZ mayor by forming a post-election alliance.

But the HDZ claimed victory in parliamentary voting in 19 out of 21 counties. Preliminary results gave the party 41 of 68 seats in the upper house — four more than in the 1993 elections.

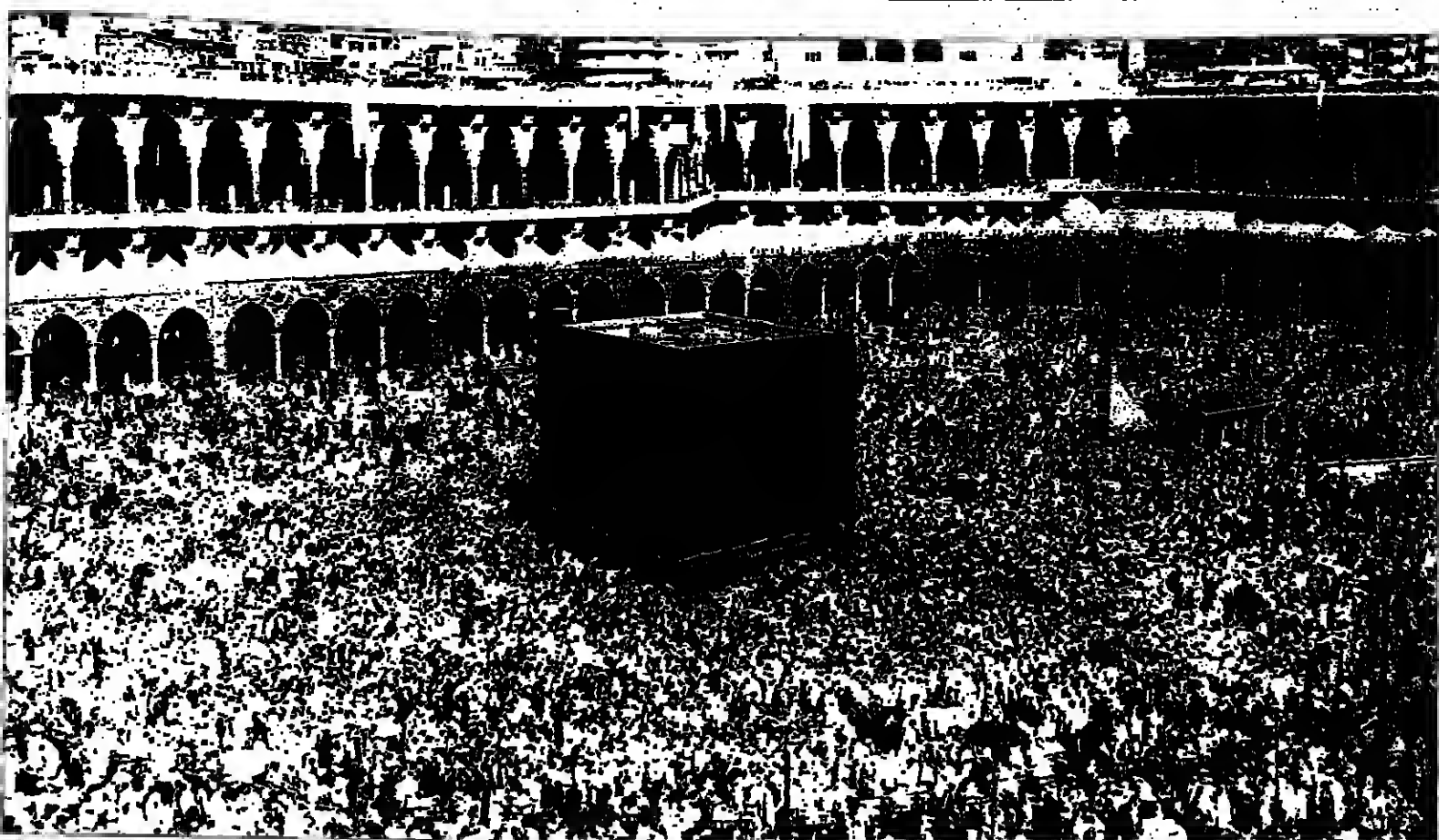


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300 feared dead as haj tent city is swept by fire



Pilgrims at Mecca, where sheer pressure of numbers - 2 million are attending this year - and poor organisation have contributed to such disasters as yesterday's fire and an incident in 1994 when hundreds of Indonesians died in a stampede

Patrick Cockburn

A fire in a tent city outside Mecca, in Saudi Arabia, killed at least 30 pilgrims, mostly Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, yesterday as they attended the annual haj (pilgrimage), though witnesses said the toll was as high as 300.

Thick clouds of smoke rose over the tents of the pilgrims as high winds spread flames through their encampments. Reports of panic among the pilgrims suggest that the casualty list will grow. The origin of the fire is not known, but may have been a gas fire belonging to one of the pilgrims.

Two million pilgrims from across the Muslim world are

taking part in the haj. In the past, the vast numbers visiting Mecca, and the ineptitude of the Saudi Arabian authorities have led to disasters in which hundreds have died.

The government said little officially yesterday except that the fire had begun at 11.45am, promising more details later.

Civil-defence officials said the fire started in a tent city near Mina, which is seven miles from Mecca. They did not con-

blazing for five hours. Details are still sketchy. The Saudi News Agency said the fire started at a bridge between Mina and Mecca. Another report suggests that it began because of the malfunction of an air-conditioning unit.

In 1994 hundreds of Indonesian pilgrims were killed when they surged forward in the ceremony of "stamping the Devil" which is part of the haj ritual.

"I can still see the thick black smoke at Mina and it is already four hours since it started"

firm the number of casualties, although the Pakistani ambassador was reported as saying that 50 of his compatriots had died.

Helicopters were brought in to try to douse the flames among the tents. "I can still see the thick black smoke at Mina and it is already four hours since it started," an onlooker in Mecca told a reporter.

The fire was later reported to have been extinguished after



significant shorts

Mandela and De Klerk warn of SA fault lines

President Nelson Mandela and his predecessor, FW de Klerk, who shared a Nobel prize for bringing democracy to South Africa, yesterday warned that their country's post-apartheid unity was cracking.

"We are burdened with the legacy of decades, indeed centuries, of deliberate division, conflict and hostility. It would be a mighty error to imagine that three years could eradicate all trace of what kept us apart for so long. Today, in some ways, the old fault lines in our society are showing more sharply," Mr Mandela told parliament.

Mr de Klerk appeared to agree. "Reconciliation, co-operation and nation-building have become central themes of your presidency. Unfortunately... objective analysis shows that we are slipping downwards, that we are beginning to lose out," he said.

Football tragedy 'sick joke'

The families of 78 fans killed in an overcrowded football stadium last year have criticised sports promoters for planning to reopen the stadium without compensating the victims. The tragedy occurred before the kickoff at a World Cup qualifying match between Costa Rica and Guatemala on 16 October, when overcrowding triggered a human avalanche in the stadium's cement bleachers. "It is like a sick joke to us that they are opening the stadium on [another] Wednesday the 16th... they are only thinking of making money," Elida Trejo, who lost her husband and son in the tragedy, said.

Prince on business in Africa

Prince Andrew urged British businesses to explore more investment and trade opportunities in Zimbabwe, saying its economic climate was improving rapidly.

The prince arrived in Zimbabwe yesterday for a three-day visit during which he will witness a joint military exercise by eight southern African nations. Britain is partly funding the exercise, to which some 1,100 troops from Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe are taking part. The exercise, aimed at honing peace-keeping skills, is the first of its kind in Africa.

Outlaw's shirt fetches \$85,000

A Nevada casino paid \$85,000 (£53,000) for the bullet-riddled shirt worn by outlaw Clyde Barrow when authorities ambushed him and his infamous girlfriend Bonnie Parker. The bid for the "death shirt" on Monday was more than double the original estimate by the San Francisco auctioneer, Butterfield and Butterfield. More than half of the money will go to Marie Barrow, the outlaw's only surviving sibling.

Israeli pays for throwing tea

An Israeli right-wing extremist was sentenced to three years in prison for throwing scalding tea in the face of dovish legislator Yael Dayan, Israeli media reported.

According to the reports, Ms Dayan, daughter of the late defence minister, Moshe Dayan, suffered second-degree burns and an eye injury in the assault. The defendant, Israel Lederman, was also given a 15-month suspended sentence.

Zambia press retains freedom

The Zambian government indefinitely postponed proposed legislation to regulate the press after public and diplomatic pressure. "In order to allow for further consultation, with all stakeholders, and principally the electors, the government has deferred the proposed Media Council Bill," David Mpamba, the Information Minister, said in a statement. Scores of Zambian journalists staged angry protests at the weekend against the proposed law which aims to give the government power to bar journalists from working.

Sour grapes in Miami

A Miami restaurant on Monday reached agreement with an insurance company for \$1.75m (£1.1m) in compensation for the destruction of its famed wine cellar during Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the restaurant's lawyer said. The case has been in dispute since 1994 and was due to reach court in May.

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international

America's black stars win their stripes the hard way



Gallery of greats: Jackie Robinson (left), the first black player admitted to Major League baseball; Tiger Woods, first black American to win the US Masters; and the basketball player Michael Jordan. Photographs: Corbis; David Taylor/Allsport; Reuters

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

Weeks of an inimitably American sporting love-in came to a climax last night with President Bill Clinton's appearance at Shea stadium, in New York, to honour the memory of a national hero with a difference.

It was 50 years to the day since Jackie Robinson took the field for the Dodgers in Brooklyn and became the first black player admitted to Major League baseball, and Mr Clinton, ever attuned to the public mood, was there to pay the nation's tribute.

Already a big event, the anniversary was given special point at the

weekend when Tiger Woods, at 21, became the first black American to win the US Masters golf tournament. It was a victory that smashed all records: Woods won by the biggest margin, with the highest under-par score - at the "whitest" golf club in the United States.

Young black golfers across the country spoke of being inspired to "go out and practise" each time they recalled Woods's victory.

Middle-class parents and grandparents - white, but especially black - delighted in the dignified comportment and linguistic sophistication of their new hero.

Some even hazarded, perhaps

from an inadequate appreciation of the historical context, that Woods's achievement - victory in a sport that is predominantly "white" - could prove even greater than Robinson's, opening the door to "colour-blindness" in all sports.

But the celebration of Jackie Robinson and Tiger Woods has not been unalloyed. Woods himself helped to puncture the bubble of euphoria by declining President Clinton's invitation to be his personal guest at Shea stadium last night. He stuck to plans to go on holiday. Whether he feared elevation to the icon status of Robinson or simply did not want to detract from the Robinson anniversary, can only be a matter for speculation.

Even before Woods's decision to go on holiday, however, the Robinson anniversary had provided the occasion for some awkward questioning about the baseball player's real legacy and about the position of blacks in US sport today.

One aspect, thrown into relief by Woods's golfing success, is the continued segregation of sport, and sports. It is not just golf that remains a largely white sport. Even professional baseball, where Robinson supposedly broke the path for blacks, boasts only 17 per cent of players who are black, and the proportion is declining. This contrasts with basketball and American football, where players are predominantly - 80 and 67 per cent respectively - black. The athletics field, and particularly the running track, is similarly dominated by blacks.

Some explain this discrepancy as a matter of class and economics rather than colour. Club and green fees, they say, are just too high for many blacks; a pair of boots and a ball are affordable. They note that new golf courses are springing up in black middle-class areas - but without concluding that the existence of "white" and "black" courses may perpetuate segregation. Nor does af-

fordability explain the relatively small number of blacks in the highly lucrative sport of baseball.

But the anniversary has also spawned a more profound question that goes well beyond the world of sport. In its starkest form, this asks whether Jackie Robinson might unwittingly be to blame for the failure of many (especially male) blacks in American society and their low expectations.

Robinson's elevation to black icon, proponents of this view say, meant many young blacks saw sport, and only sport, as their passport to wealth and success. They cite the succession of black sporting heroes - the

latest, before Tiger Woods, being the basketball player Michael Jordan - as giving blacks too narrow a field of role models, and whites an excuse to believe blacks were succeeding in American society.

Such critics support their view with reference to a recent survey, according to which two-thirds of young black men "expected" to become professional sportsmen, yet only one in 10,000 would ever achieve that goal. They are thus left with the worst of two worlds: they have an aspiration which diverts them from academic study and other professional ambitions and which is also unattainable.

You have one week to live.

Time Out

Out Wednesday

Tuvalu votes to keep the Union flag flying in South Pacific

Robert Keltch-Field
Associated Press

Suva — After a two-year absence, the Union emblem once again flies as part of Tuvalu's national flag, showing that the sun has not quite set on this tiny corner of the former empire.

Tuvalu's Prime Minister, Sikenibea Paeniu, said yesterday that the Union flag was restored to the flag by a 7-5 vote in parliament last week.

Former prime minister Kamuta Laatasi, who spearheaded the removal of the Union emblem from the Pacific nation's flag in 1995, bitterly opposed the turnaround. "He was very anti," Mr Paeniu said. "He believed the flag should not change. He said we're reinstating the independence flag basically as a tribute to the fathers of our nation who chose that flag in consultation with the people."

The restoration of the Union flag replaces a gaily coloured banner favoured by the Laatasi government and ends 20 months of political turmoil in the lives of Tuvalu's 9,000 Polynesian residents.

Mr Paeniu had parliament restore the design Tuvalu adopted when it gained independence from Britain in 1978 - a yellow background with the Union flag in the top left-hand corner and nine stars representing the nation's nine atolls.

In October 1995, Mr Laatasi had substituted a complex red, blue, white and yellow striped and starred flag as a step toward becoming a republic, and dropped Britain's Queen as head of state. The new flag was controversial because he had not consulted public opinion. One island, Niutao, cut it down the first time it was raised there.

Mr Paeniu, a 41-year-old economist who had lost the prime ministership to Mr Laatasi in an election three years earlier, ousted the latter last December on a 7-5 vote of no confidence in Parliament.

Now the flag has been restored, and Mr Laatasi's plan for a republic has been shelved.

"Tuvalu is too young to go into all this movement, when considering the fact that Aus-

tralia has been in existence for over 200 years and the republic issue is still being debated there. And we're not even 20 years old," Mr Paeniu said.

Mr Laatasi was also partly undercut by local uproar over a deal his government made to let the Asia Pacific Telecommunications company lease Tuvalu's area code to carry toll calls. This earned more than \$420,000 (£263,000) a year for a country with a budget of less than \$4m.



“This country is too young to debate the republic issue... Australia is 200 years old, we're not even 20”

Then the government discovered that international telephone sex calls were being routed through Tuvalu's exchange, outraging the powerful Ecclesiastical Church.

A group of nine coral islands, Tuvalu became an independent constitutional monarchy, with the Queen as its head, on 1 October 1978. The capital, Funafuti, which is also the main island, is about 680 miles north of Fiji's capital, Suva. Tuvalu's latest move means six of the 16-nation South Pacific Forum still show the Union flag. The others are Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Niue and the Cook Islands.

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تحتفظ من الأصل

A little redistribution does you good

Here is a question for New Labour. Does its leader accept it is a responsibility of government to reduce inequality? We only ask because Gordon Brown seemed reluctant to be drawn on this issue last week. It is, of course, a trick question. It was asked by Tony Blair of John Major two years ago in the House of Commons. Now, two years may be a long time in the politics of today's Labour Party, but given that Mr Major's answer was "Yes" even Mr Blair is hardly going to answer "No".

Mr Major's one-word reply was one of the more genuinely shocking moments of the last and unlamented parliament. It was certainly not what Margaret Thatcher would have said, but it is also difficult to reconcile with the softer-edged philosophy of the Conservative government since 1990.

Similarly, many *Independent* readers will treat the Prime Minister's concern for the have-nots in today's newspaper with a curling eyebrow. Yet there is a credible argument Mr Major could deploy. Greater inequality, he could say, was a price we had to pay for halting our relative economic decline. It is a price we probably have to continue to pay if we want to remain competitive in world markets; but so long as we can sustain growth then we can ensure that the less fortunate do not lose out in absolute terms.

That was Baroness Thatcher's argument, and it remains the logical case of the Conservatives still. It was an argu-

ment which explicitly turned its back on the idea that the state had a responsibility to promote equality. In today's article, Mr Major seeks both to proclaim himself a One Nation Tory and to condemn the self-defeating "paternalism" of the Macmillan era in which he grew up. The only way to square this particular circle is to avoid the issue of equality altogether – to ditch wealth comparisons as a blind alley. He can only speak of One Nation by turning a blind eye to the huge growth in the numbers of the relatively poor over the past 18 years.

When it comes to equality, the record of the Conservatives is stark. The gap between rich and poor has grown sharply. The poor may not be significantly worse off in real terms than in 1979, but there are three times as many families dependent on state benefits than there were – and incomes for those in the middle and at the top end of the distribution have risen substantially. And for those at the very top, the increases have been so steep as to induce a sense of moral vertigo.

The most dramatic growth in inequality happened in the 1980s, mostly as a result of the opening of the British economy to world markets and the collapse in demand for unskilled labour. But the Tory government's tax policies had an important effect in widening the gap still further, and the general direction of tax policy has not changed since Mr Major became Prime Minister. Nor has a One Nation instinct been apparent in other

politics. The Tory enthusiasm for cutting inheritance tax is hardly congruent with it. Nor is an education policy which, by putting parental choice at its heart, inevitably accelerates the polarisation of schools into good ones for the better-off and sink schools for the poor. There are logical economic reasons behind these and many other policies. Tory impatience with "equality" as a political idea has a long and intellectually coherent pedigree. Fair enough. But one reason the country may be prepared to contemplate change at this election is that there is a widespread desire to see some of the divisions in our nation healed. It may be

conscience. It may be middle-class self-preservation, confronted by the spectre of rising crime. But it seems to exist. "Equality" is not a big New Labour word either. But simply by asking that question of Mr Major two years ago, Mr Blair has accepted that a Labour government would be under an obligation to reduce the gap between rich and poor. This is not, as Mr Blair has accepted, simply a matter of that slippery concept, equality of opportunity. "For the notion of community to have any meaning, then there must be a certain degree of equality of outcome," he said in 1993. That is the kind of phrase calculated

to summon up unwelcome ghosts of the long-distant time, "BT", or Before Thatcher. And Mr Blair and his Shadow Chancellor become strangely inarticulate when pressed for further particulars. It was up to David Blunkett, a less squeamish politician, to explain New Labour's credo in an important speech earlier this year. "There was a time, of course, when socialists believed that by redistribution of income through progressive taxation, it would be possible to provide equal treatment for everyone," he said. Cash transfers are no longer an option, he added brutally. "The only way of enabling people to rise out of poverty and disadvantage is by enabling them to earn their own living."

Mr Blair was graded into declaring this week that of course he was passionate about social justice – for him, widening educational opportunity is social justice, not handouts to the poor.

He is right, but there is a problem with this view, which has not so far been examined in this election campaign. Of course, if a Labour government can "cut the bills of failure" by shifting large numbers of people off welfare and into work, then many of the poor will be better off and the gap between the rich and (many of) the poor will have narrowed. But that is a big "if", and this newspaper has yet to be convinced that Mr Brown's plan for 250,000 young and long-term unemployed, paid for by the windfall levy on privatised companies, is of the kind of

scale that will match up to the challenge.

Let us hope that, if Mr Brown gets to present a July budget, he will be bold. It may be that the tax system is neither the most important cause of greater inequality, nor the most effective means of closing the gap, but there is a strong case for an immediate move to take away tax reliefs from the better-off. A little old-fashioned redistribution would do the country good and the economy no harm. Yesterday's words from both leaders were cheering. But actions would be better.

A mutual friend in the Co-op

The Co-operative Wholesale Society is being stalked. There will be many people who, unsympathetic both to the aims and style of the break-up specialist Andrew Regan, will be wondering if co-operative commerce has had its day. After all, the Rochdale Pioneers went into business a long time ago, and high-time retailing is no playground these days. But our institutional landscape would be severely diminished by the disappearance of the co-operative movement, just as there must surely be a place, still, for the mutual principle in financial services and housing finance. The CWS could perform better – but its members ought to keep their nerve.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Britain's 'two nations' revisited

Sir: Over here from Canada for the first time in years, I have been shown around by my hosts. They took me just a few miles to an exciting political spot. Visiting the Tatton constituency I found a higher concentration of new German executive cars than anywhere I can think of in Canada. It seemed that a little "sleaze" was a small price to pay for so much general wealth.

I later visited former mining and industrial areas that I had long ago recalled as tight-knit, real "communities". Many were devastated by crime, drug-users and unemployment. Is this the "two nations" of which Disraeli spoke? I heard of hospital bed losses, failing schools, sick folk dying in ambulances. Then I read *The Independent* of Friday, 11 April. It amazes me that Polly Toynbee found people suffering and yet unprepared to vote. These same people now have 2 million more people between them and a job than in 1979. They must pay VAT – though they probably do not pay income tax – so all the tax cuts went against them. Yet your Conservatives are safe from their wrath... ours were kicked to oblivion in 1993.

God help you if you will not help yourselves.
JIM TOBIN
Crews, Cheshire

Sir: The Secretary of State for Wales, William Hague, expressing his total opposition last week even to a review of our present electoral system, went so far as to claim that those countries which had adopted proportionally representative voting system were proven weak and unstable. He picked, as one would expect, on Italy. He failed to mention those in Europe which had adopted some other form of voting than "first past the post", including Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Spain and Portugal; and further afield, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and others. Are all these unstable societies?

Surely the Tory party leadership should already have taken account of the facts, apparent from recent by-election results and opinion polls, that there are scores of constituencies throughout Britain where the third party in voting terms is *Liberal Democrat*, but with little or no chance of winning; that tactical voting, especially among the young, is on the increase; and that New Labour has reassured its pledge to have a referendum about electoral reform during the lifetime of the next parliament.

In 1951 Winston Churchill declared that unless the unfair electoral system were changed there would be dire future consequences for the Tories. If these long-hatched chickens are now coming home to roost, who is to blame?
Sir FREDERIC BENNETT
Aberavon, Gwynedd

Sir: Apropos Tony Blair's apparent U-turn over privatisation, would the heir to a wasted estate make it his first priority to buy back the family silver put in pawn to pay gambling debts? Rather, he might have to sell what remains of such assets in order to put his estate back on its feet as a going concern. We owed Thatcher to Benn and Scargill; we will owe Blair to Major and Howard.
JOHN A DAVIS
Chalfont, Cheshire



Unseen art hoard in Whitehall

Sir: The news (report, 12 April) that a catalogue of the Government Art Collection is being published is welcome, but what is less welcome is the fact that no steps are being taken to provide members of the public with access to the items in the collection. Surely double standards are being adopted here: the so-called "V&A List" is a catalogue of the works of art and other objects of national importance in private hands which are conditionally exempted from capital taxation. It is available for inspection by members of the public at major national museums, on a computer disk which can be purchased from the Inland Revenue for £10, and on the Internet. Members of the public have a right to require access to any item in this list on request to the owner or agent named in the list.

These are items on which the Government has deferred a capital tax charge (which would otherwise have been levied as a percentage of the value of the object) in return for the provision of public access. Should not therefore items the whole cost of which has been borne by the public be made all the more readily available for inspection by members of the public?

It is all very well for the Government to adorn the walls of ministry offices with original works of art, thus acting as a patron of contemporary artists and, one hopes, also making a good investment; but if private owners who benefit from public financial commitment to our artistic heritage

have to provide public access by appointment, so, too, should the Government itself.
RHODERICK VOREMBERG
Salisbury
Wiltshire

Charity names prostituted

Sir: David Robinson (letter, 9 April) asks why he is being inundated by charities asking for money for a mention in a programme or brochure.

The likely reason that the callers all sound the same is that they are all from the same company. Those middlemen, with professional telephone salespeople, produce such programmes with the sole aim of raising funding. Before passing the money on to the charity concerned, they take out their own costs and a profit margin. This often leaves a little as 20p in the pound to go to the charity.

Why do the charities agree to this prostitution of their names? They see only 20p that they wouldn't otherwise get, and are blind to the danger of business fatigue.
GAVIN WALKER
Redmile, Leicestershire

Sir: I was saddened to read the letter of David Robinson about charitable organisations acting like "hunting dogs". Having recently attempted to appeal to many industries and shopping outlets for

help to build a much-needed nursery, I know that it is hard to get scraps from the rich man's table.

I thought that at least good manners would warrant a reply – even a polite refusal and wishes of good luck, but, alas, it seems that has gone by the wayside.

Perhaps David Robinson should try fund-raising for a charity and see how disheartening and humiliating it can be.
FR MICHAEL HARTLEY
Adwood
Greater Manchester

Private landlords face ruin

Sir: The Government claims that it is initiating policies to help small businesses. This is clearly not the case when it comes to the private rented sector of the housing market.

One of the last acts by the Government will cut the rent payable to landlords in half. There will be a devastating effect on house providers when the single room rent on housing benefit payments is extended to all single people under the age of 60 and the 50 per cent top-up between reference rents and local rents is abolished.

This legislation will cripple an enormous number of small businesses as hundreds of landlords will be forced out of business. Landlords have been encouraged by the Conservatives to invest in raising housing standards only to

find the properties will no longer attract an economic rent.

As these regulations apply only to the private rented sector – housing associations being exempt – I can only conclude this is an attempt by the Conservatives, the so-called champions of private initiative, to nationalise the rented sector of the housing market.

The legislation will force many landlords to stop investing in properties. The Conservative manifesto states: "Entrepreneurs often risk everything when they set up their own business." They certainly do when investing in housing under a Conservative government.
MARTIN MOYLAN
Treasurer
National Federation of Residential Landlords
Manchester

Library without walls – or money

Sir: The concept of the "library without walls" (Network+, 15 April) is doomed in the UK unless government policy on freely available networked information is radically altered. From my desktop in a university, I have free access to the computer catalogue of the Library of Congress, plus all the other good things such as the "American Memory" database touched on in your article. When I investigate similar access to the holdings of the British Library, I encounter

several stumbling blocks: front-end software (PC only – not Macintosh) is required to access the system even on a trial basis; the software installation is not straightforward on my alternative Windows 95 machine; it most definitely is not free. Result: the trial is abandoned.

Unfortunately, this is typical of the way in which national institutions such as the British Library and the Meteorological Office are forced, through lack of funding or the need to be self-funding, to charge for what should be freely available.

What is the point of digitising material when the general public doesn't even have free access to basic catalogues?
MIKE AINSCOUGH
Henfield
West Sussex

Moral lesson of cat and bird

Sir: So Melvin Goldsmith (letter, 12 April) thinks there is an inconsistency when a nation of cat-lovers criticises a handful of humanists.

When I hear a bird starting to squawk in my hedge with my cat nearby I do my utmost to rescue the bird – if I am unsuccessful I am sad about it, but I cannot change the instinctive nature of animals. I can never accept the chasing of deer and foxes as a "sport" in the same category as tennis and football. I expect human beings to have some moral sense – I do not expect this of animals.
RHODA MELVILLE
Titchhurst
Berkshire

Blame fishermen, not Brussels

Sir: Everyone sympathises with the paucity of fish and the plight of fishermen. However, in recent years they have themselves to blame by their intensive fishing methods, which have resulted in the near disappearance of fish stocks.

The British problem has been magnified by British fishermen themselves selling their quotas to both Spanish and Dutch fishing companies.

Under Single Market rules, to which Britain has signed up, John Major has absolutely no case for asking his colleagues in the European Council to stop these Spanish and Dutch fishermen from taking over British quotas, since these rules allow the free movement of capital, people and businesses to operate within the EU countries.

The Spanish have deactivated more of their fishing fleet than has Britain. There needs to be much more serious discussion amongst the Council of Ministers responsible for fisheries policy in order to ensure that we will have fish in our seas in five years' time.
Mrs PAMELA WARD
Chairman
European Movement UK
Huddersfield

Honour those who serve

Sir: Godfrey Hodgson gets one thing absolutely correct: the British honours system is horribly bloated (11 April). There are too many honours, given too often to too many politicians' friends.

However Gore Vidal has made the observation that for centuries the British government has got away with paying its civil servants with honour rather than cash. That enabled it to secure the services of the brightest and the best without having to enter an auction for these services.

The country should celebrate the teacher and the nurse who serve selflessly for years. Those with an outstanding sense of civic duty are deserving of the honour of the country.
TETTEH TURKSON
London W12

Trust in change

Sir: I am sick and tired of being told by Tory politicians that we cannot trust Tony Blair because he keeps changing his mind about things. We are repeatedly quoted Tony Blair's speeches from as long as three years ago and then told that they contradict what he says today. What kind of idiots do the Conservatives think voters are? Any politician who refused to change and develop his policies over three years would not be fit for anything.
TOBY STONE
Oxford

Doorstep sleaze

Sir: My son is canvassing for a Member of Parliament in East Anglia. He got into conversation with a girl of eight or nine and passed some pleasantries with her, he holding her cat for a bit whilst she held his clipboard. A few moments later, on passing her and her mother, he overheard her protesting, "Oh no Mum, he's not a pervers; he's a Conservative."
MARILYN KIRK
Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire

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April 16 1997

analysis

When treasure becomes a burden

Our greatest galleries will lose their place on the international stage unless they defy the wishes of their biggest benefactors, argues David Lister

C an philanthropy be bad for the nation's cultural health? Does it profit the arts if our most celebrated benefactors are also control freaks?

This spring the director of the fabulous Glasgow Burrell collection, Julian Spalding, will use more diplomatic language when he appears before a parliamentary commission to defend himself against the charge of breaching the will of Sir William Burrell, the Glasgow shipping magnate and art collector. But privately he will probably be thinking that the ego of Sir William, who died in 1958, reaches beyond the grave. Its reach is not so long as that of Lady Wallace, whose dying wishes over her London collection of paintings, furniture and porcelain, bequeathed to the nation 100 years ago, have negative effects on exhibitions being held today.

The Wallace, the Tate, the Walker in Liverpool and galleries up and down the country will have their gaze on Glasgow as the Burrell issue threatens to engulf the art world. Mr Spalding, the head of Glasgow's museums, has pledged to make a dramatic change to the Burrell, the city's one internationally famous museum - now housed in a new £20m building in 300 acres of parkland - with its display of 8,000 items including antiquities, jades, bronzes, medieval tapestries, Cézannes and Rembrandts.

Mr Spalding has decided to go against the strict terms of Sir William's 1944 bequest, which included a codicil that the lending of his collection should be restricted to major institutions in Britain, and nothing should go abroad. Mr Spalding, backed by the city council, wants to alter the terms, which requires an Act of Parliament.

It is necessary, he says, because the competition for top art exhibitions is now so intense that a gallery can hope to attract loans from abroad only if it can return the favour from time to time. If Glasgow does not share the Burrell treasures with the world, the world will just stop sharing its treasures with Glasgow. "We borrow from the great museums of the world," he explains, "and



Rodin's *Thinker*, part of the Burrell collection in Glasgow, where the director wants to alter the terms of a bequest so that items can be loaned abroad

Photograph: Peter Devlin

they want something back."

He is also quick to point out the illogicality of Sir William's decrees, made during the Second World War when travel was hazardous. Mr Spalding says puntingly: "I can put a Burrell item on a plane in Glasgow and fly it to London, but I cannot fly it to France or New York because that would mean travelling over water ... Sir William certainly wanted his collection to be lent, but only in Britain, because as a ship-owner, he did not trust ships. He could not have predicted the safety of air travel, which now enables all the great museums of the world to lend freely to each other ... He originally wanted that his collections should be housed 16 miles from the city, because it was so polluted. He could not have predicted the effects of the Clean Air Act, which in fact allowed the Burrell Gallery to be built in Glasgow itself."

The Glasgow press has called Mr Spalding the sort of names it usually reserves for English soccer fans, and the trustees have dissociated themselves from Spalding and called in the parliamentary commissioners.

In the background is a period of savage council cuts which have led to redundancies among museum staff and mutterings about Mr Spalding failing to replace key posts, including the keeper of the Burrell collection itself.

But the central issue, which could affect all museums and galleries, is whether it is incumbent upon a museum's trustees and director to honour strictly and in perpetuity the terms of a bequest. Is it both illegal and immoral to flout the instructions in a benefactor's will? And does it make any long-term practical sense? Might it mean that bequests to British galleries will dry up, if benefactors fear that their dying wishes will be overturned.

Conversely, does it make any sense to abide by every dot and comma of a bequest when conservation arrangements, and funding, can change beyond recognition over the decades and even centuries since the original bequests were made?

So far Mr Spalding has failed to find an ally. Magnus Linklater, former editor of *The Scotsman*, says: "A trust is being broken and if it can be done once, it will be done again. The time has come for the art world south as well as north of the Border to take an interest, because the principle involved is universal."

But principles and art bequests are rather more confused than Mr Spalding's detractors would have us

believe. Take the case of Sir Denis Mahon, the distinguished octogenarian art collector, who has announced to universal acclaim that he is leaving his collection of Italian Baroque paintings to the National Gallery and other museums with the stated condition that the paintings be withdrawn if the Government cuts funding to those galleries, or they charge for admission.

Well, it sounded good. But within days the Government did indeed cut the National Gallery's funding, in last autumn's Budget. Having painted himself into a corner, Sir Denis took evasive action, and six other galleries. Three pounds, less than the price of parking near the free National Gallery, does not seem Draconian, and, as Mr Foster goes on to say, the losers from Sir Denis's withdrawal of his gift are not the Government, but the schoolchildren of Liverpool.

According to one gallery director, Sir Denis is merely an extreme example of many who leave an art bequest. "It's rarely simple philanthropy. They want their name to live on, and to control the bequest after their death. In Sir Denis's case, he wants to control national policy after his death."

But linking a bequest to a political condition about funding or charging in the Nineties is as fraught as making conditions for all time about travel based on the safety and technology available in the Forties.

The National Lottery is changing the funding equation. Formerly only able to give money to new buildings, the lottery is now rapidly being overhauled to be able to fund artists themselves, new commissions, educational schemes. If that trend continues, will one in years to come be able to make such a strong case against cuts in annual revenue funding by government?

As for charging, what if museums decide to charge tourists but exempt local people? Would that be so wrong? Take one of the most famous bequests in this country - Michelangelo's *Tondo* in the Royal Academy, one of only four sculptures by Michelangelo outside Italy. Yet even

if you go to the Royal Academy you are likely to miss it. The Royal Academy's magazine says in its latest issue: "The *Tondo* is now well protected behind bullet-proof glass, but its colour and the harsh lighting have flattened the carving's appearance, detracting considerably from its artistic impact."

That's quite an admission for the institution itself to make. The 19th-century collector and amateur artist George Beaumont wanted all artists "to have free access to it". His wish has been granted. But in 1827, the year Beaumont died, bullet-proof glass did not exist. It is arguable that encasing the *Tondo* in glass which distorts its appearance achieves little. But the point remains that the man making the bequest could not have foreseen that art treasures could become targets for terrorists or vandals, could not have anticipated bullet-proof glass, and, had he done so, might not have insisted that the work be accessible to artists at all times.

The Wallace Collection, which includes the *Laughing Cavalier* by Franz Hals, is also tied to the restrictive wishes of its benefactor. Lady Wallace 100 years ago decreed: "The collection must be kept together Unmixed with other works of art."

Ros Saville, director of the Wallace, admits that there were discussions about "reconsidering" the deeds of trust, but it was decided it would not be appropriate. Many of the porcelain works are fragile; travel for people is easier than

for works of art, so people should come to the Wallace rather than the Wallace come to the people.

But she admits that sometimes it can be heartbreaking. Last year the National Gallery had an exhibition of Rubens' landscapes and, in her words, "it would have been magic to lend Rubens' *Rainbow* landscape whose pair was in the exhibition. But the excitement of the possibilities were outweighed by the morality of going against the terms of the bequest. It is the thin end of the wedge. If the roof blew off, you would be tempted to sell something."

Selling off items in a bequest is, everyone seems to agree, beyond the moral pale. But should there be such a moral imperative to abide by terms of a bequest in relation to loans and methods of display? Did Sir William Burrell on his deathbed in the late Fifties imagine that 40 years later artworks could go by train all the way to the Louvre?

Timothy Mason, director of the Museums and Galleries Commission, does not rule out questioning the terms of a bequest when changing circumstances make it plausible. "It should be a matter of common sense," he says. But one gallery director's common sense is another's outrage.

Much better if art collectors generous enough to enrich the nation's heritage do so in a true spirit of philanthropy, without attempting to be a curator in a time machine, tying future generations to conditions that future centuries viewing art on the Internet may find laughable.

6 If Glasgow does not share with the rest of the world, the world will not share with Glasgow

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Capital shock: London is being shut off

When I lived in London I always lived in west London, for no very good reason except that that was the first bit of London you got to from Wales, where I had come from. Maybe, in true immigrant fashion, I just got off the first boat or train from Welsh Wales and took rooms where I was. I do remember that the very first general election at which I was entitled to vote took place when I had just moved to Addison Road near Olympia, and the very first piece of election literature I received was from the Welsh Nationalists. Admittedly, it was forwarded to me from the parental home in Wrexham, but it was impressive none the less to get Welsh propaganda in London, and if there had been a Plaid Cymru candidate standing he would have got my vote.

However, this is not an election piece. This is a west London piece. For the next 20 years I lived in west London, Notting Hill mostly, and this dictated everything, even our weekend excursions. If you live in west London, you don't

easily pop out to the Kentish countryside or the prairies of Essex. You go to the Chilterns and the Thames valley. So I gradually became oriented to the west, and that may partly explain why, now that I live out of London, I live due west, in Wiltshire. So my connection with west London is not broken, as every time I go to London I go in via west London.

And this is what allows me to spot something that Londoners themselves may not have noticed, which is that it is gradually but surely becoming harder to get into London via the west, and that, if you want my opinion, someone is trying to stop people getting in altogether.

For instance, if I come to London by train, I come in along the Great Western line from Bath. I then get the Bakerloo line from Paddington to central London. However, the Bakerloo line is being gradually shut down. In the last few months there have been big notices saying that for the foreseeable future trains will only go as far as Piccadilly Circus, and never any further. This came as no great surprise

to me, as even before then trains on the Bakerloo line had been erratic, with blackboards at Paddington saying LONG DELAYS TODAY ON BAKERLOO LINE or LONDON UNDERGROUND ADVISE YOU TO GO FOR A WALK INSTEAD. But it does seem extreme to close down a whole Underground line right in the middle.

I do not always come to London by train. Sometimes I come by car. I used to come in by the M4, but ever since this began to be closed

down by roadworks and by congestion at Hammersmith we have taken to using the A303 (past Stonehenge) and then the M3. That is the road we used last weekend when we went to stay with friends in Barnes. And that is where we had the following conversation with our host, William.

Us: We're thinking of going to the West End. What's the best way?

William: Don't go by car, whatever you do. Even if you get across the Thames, which is doubtful, you'll never get a place to park.

Us: What's this problem about crossing the Thames?

William: Hammersmith Bridge is closed to everything except buses. Some major strengthening scheme, apparently. Cars have to find another route now, so all the other bridges are getting overused. It's having a big effect on house prices in Barnes, too.

Us: You mean, they're going down?

William: No. Up.

Us: You mean, Barnes house prices are going up as it gets less accessible? It's usually the other way round.

William: It's not the access. It's the peace and quiet. Barnes was a through way for traffic. Now it's like a village. Lovely. So long as the bridge is closed it's going to be great, and there are strange rumours going round that it may never be open again.

It's only two straws in the wind, but they are big straws. The Bakerloo line being cut in half, Hammersmith Bridge being closed. Is it too ludicrous to suggest that London is gradually being cut off from the rest of the world, and that places like Barnes will soon be back in the country?

Here is another straw in the wind. The first pub you come to, coming out of London across (the now foot-passenger-only) Hammersmith Bridge is a big white building which used to be called the Boileau Arms. Then, when theme pubs were all the rage, it became the Old Rangoon. Now, I notice, it has been renamed again. It is now The Garden House.

Is that because it is soon going to be a country pub, outside London, out in rural Barnes?

Just asking.

Miles Kingston

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Conservatives have served the many, not the few

I grew up in inner London in the 1950s. That gave me a valuable experience.

I learnt that there was much that was wrong with Britain's inner-cities. They are where we need good schools the most, but where, too often, the worst schools are found. They are where high public services would have greatest impact, but where bureaucracy and a lack of accountability let down those in real need. They are where people need opportunities the most – but where it is hardest to get on the ladder.

But there was also much that was right about the community in which I grew up. There was a web of informal social support – a neighbourliness – which helped people living together. Parents kept a watchful eye, not just on their own children, but on friends and elderly neighbours. Vandalism and anti-social behaviour were not unknown – but they were not excused or explained away.

In the late Fifties and Sixties, many inner-city terraces were demolished. Communities were rehoused in tower blocks that were more modern, clean and spacious. But too often, they were also soulless. The housing was better, but the community was lost.

The best of intentions had produced the worst of results. Across Britain the state was taking over too much. We created a well-meaning system of paternalism, where the state decided what people ought to want, where the Government, national or local, created its dependent client groups and based its power on them.

Mutual assistance was replaced by the primacy of the welfare state. Councils took over and self-help was pushed aside. Education became more the school's responsibility, less the parents'. Parents were given little choice. Social Services moved in, and community responsibility weakened.

Over the past 15 years we have tried to ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past. Eighty-five per cent of housing development funds now go to mixed housing on a human scale. We have created diversity in estate types by giving tenants the right to buy – 1.4 million families have exercised this right in the teeth of bitter Labour opposition. We have given tenants a much greater say in running their own estates. With those rights came responsibilities: local authorities were given the ability to crack down on anti-social behaviour.

We put money into the renovation and rebuilding of poor quality public housing. Over the past 10 years, £2bn has been spent improving 500 of the worst estates. I entered politics not just because I wanted to see Britain prosper, but because I wanted everyone to share in that prosperity. I wanted to turn "have nots" into "haves": to help build the security of ownership and self-reliance – to widen opportunity for all. It is one of this Government's proudest achievements that we have spread a better quality of life throughout the population. That 68 per cent of homes in England are owner-occupied, compared with 56 per cent when we were elected. That 86 per cent of households have central heating – against just over half then. That one in three young people now go on to higher education – up from one in eight in 1979.

These dry statistics bear out a fundamental truth about the Conservatives: that we have governed for the many and not for the few.

At the peak of Britain's industrial restructuring, 10 years ago, an extra 7 or 8 per cent of the working population was on the dole in the



by John Major

Our philosophy is about treating all people as equal citizens, with a right to independence

depressed regions of the North compared to London and the South-east. Now those differences have been cut in half, and every region of the UK has unemployment levels below the average for the rest of Europe. It hasn't happened by accident. It is not simply the product of good intentions. It is the result of Conservative enterprise policies that are attracting new industries and investment.

We've made Britain the lowest taxed major economy in Europe. We've taxed the unions. We've freed business from the burdens that Labour would bring back through the job-destroying Social Chapter and minimum wage. And we have brought private sector funding into areas which have been run down for generations.

This Government has transformed areas like Hulme in Manchester. Four years ago it was marked by high unemployment, soaring crime and a dehumanising high rise estate. Now nearly 900 new jobs have been saved or created through private sector investment in social housing. My objective is to transform the remaining large-scale public estates over the next decade. We are committed to transfer – with tenants' consent – over half of the remaining public housing stock to new partnership landlords. This will give estates around £25bn in private investment.

But it's not just housing. In Kings Heath, Birmingham, Baverstock school – which serves the city's poorest neighbourhoods – has become Grant Maintained. An enthusiastic head teacher has restored pride, discipline and standards. In 1988 one in 14 pupils gained five GCSEs at grade A-C; now the figure is one in three. Then Baverstock had no sixth form. Now three out of four will be staying on in the sixth form established only four years ago. In Walsall an abandoned power station is being redeveloped. After 15 years 300 new houses, a golf course and nature reserve will take the place of rotting concrete and rusty boilers. Eight million pounds from Government has attracted £54m in private investment. The whole process is creating well over 1,000 new jobs.

Eighteen years in opposition have left Labour ravenous for power. They mouth the words they are given, wear the right suit and tie, smile when told to do so. What lies behind the smile?

Those who really seek to raise educational standards will not pin their faith to a party which mouths pieties after it has opposed every measure of school performance. Those who really wish to turn "have nots" into "haves" will not put their trust in a party which fought council house sales and seeks to punish those who have bought shares in privatised industry. Those who really want to provide jobs will not allow the Social Chapter and minimum wage to drive young people into unemployment.

When I speak about the classless society, I have in mind the sort of people amongst whom I grew up. They deserve opportunity and choice. They should not be fobbed off with fine words and an easy smile.

Our philosophy is about treating all people as equal citizens – with a right to independence and self-respect. Yes, we believe in helping the less well-off. But it does them no favours to make them dependent on that help. I am determined to give everyone the opportunity to rise through their own efforts and share in the rewards of Conservative prosperity.

We cannot yet know for sure, but it is perfectly plausible that Tiger Woods will earn more money more quickly than any other human being in history. That is one measure of the importance of his astonishing victory US Masters golf tournament at the weekend. But his success – and more important, the response to it – has implications far beyond golf, far beyond sports, indeed far beyond money. It has implications for values in the next century.

Even people who cannot abide golf would be entranced by the story. A man aged 21 utterly dominates the top US golf tournament with a lead of 12 strokes, humiliating a whole generation of the game's top players. More than this, he has the cool, confident charm that encouraged a US TV commentator in remark that he "must be the most eligible bachelor in the world". His triumph is greeted with warmth and delight by the largely white southern US golf crowds – the game was at Augusta in Georgia – which is interesting given that he is a person of colour. His father is African-American, his mother Thai. He is the new, great American hero.

There are special features particular to the United States that explain this phenomenon. Race is one. He clearly has that ability to make white Americans feel good about race, like General Colin Powell, he is an outstanding human being who happens not to be white.

Class is another. He comes from a secure, well-connected upper-middle class family – his father was an army intelligence expert and he was on TV at the age of two putting with Bob Hope.

Golf is a third special feature. Golf, unlike American football, basketball, or indeed any other mainstream US sport, has an unusual status on the social, financial and demographic scales. It is smart in that rich people vie to join exclusive clubs. It is associated with financial power – witness the number of times US corporations feature it in their adverts. And it is played by the relatively old. Since successful, richer and older people make a wonderful market, anyone who is successful at golf is immensely attractive to US advertisers.

At the moment, Tiger Woods' main sponsor is the sports-wear manufacturer Nike, and already Nike's little emblem on his hat has flashed before several hundred million people. But rich people do not just buy sports-wear. A hero golfer can sell anything. That is why he is being predicted to become a US course in less than four hours, given the registered way the game is organised. (On many courses, your



Young, black and gifted – and already extremely wealthy – Tiger Woods may not only reshape golf, but our future ideals

opened world, which give a global significance to this young man and which will mean that we may well hear much, much more about him over the next 40 years.

Think of the features that will make the early years of the next century different from the second half of this one. One is the growth of information. We are already bombarded with information; it will get much, much worse, as the variety of delivery mechanisms multiplies. To get messages clearly across this cacophony requires people who command recognition and respect, such as Tiger Woods.

Another feature will be the growth of leisure. Golf is a wonderful absorber of leisure time. I'm told by a colleague over from the States that he reckons it is impossible to get round a US course in less than four hours, given the registered way the game is organised. (On many courses, your

must travel in a golf cart round a specified track – you are not allowed to walk anymore.) Expect sports that successfully absorb a lot of leisure time to carry on growing – golf is a prime example.

Another feature will be globalisation and in particular the rise of East Asia as a dominant economic region. Golf is already strongly established in Japan and is now rapidly conquering the rest of the third time zone. Its particular attraction there is that it needs a lot of space. So in countries that are short of space relative to the population, golf becomes a particularly elite sport. This top-of-the-market image will propel it much faster in the newly-rich economies of the region. But Asia has up to now lacked stars to lift the game's profile. Now it has one. Tiger Woods, half-Thai, is the ideal symbol for golf in Asia.

Another feature that will dominate the next century leads on from this. There has, in the last 20 years, been a rise in differentials of income and wealth in many countries. Expect that to become more evident, not so much in the present developed world, but as a result of the growing importance of the newly-industrialised countries, in particular China, where wealth differentials are very large indeed. Golf has been prospering in part because it is an expensive game, a game of the elite. What is, however, only just beginning to show through is the rising impor-

ance of elite (or at least elitish) values: life-styles that spread down from the top rather than push upwards from the bottom. For the second half of this century life-styles have welled up from the mass market – think of jeans or fizzy drinks. A century ago they descended from above. Expect a return to that pattern, where fashion is in the hands of the elite. Golf has been successful in terms of its growth, but it has not been a fashionable game; it will be in the future.

But perhaps the most dominant force of the first half of the next century will be the ageing of the developed world. Golf again is the ideal game for the burgeoning not-quite-so-young leisured class. You might imagine that ageing will increase the demand for older sports stars, and to some extent it will. But older people do not necessarily want people of their own age as their heroes. How wonderful that there should be someone of the next generation but one coming on now to inspire them. In any case, a golf star of any age will attract more attention than a star of a youth sport like, say, a sky-diving or mountain-hiking.

Finally, you would expect an older developed world to show signs of wanting to embrace "older values": a desire for order rather than license, for tried-and-trusted remedies rather than experimental ones, for calm rather than chaos. There are other calm sports, but few can surely boast the same standards of good behaviour among the fans. Golf louts? Hardly.

And of course the wonderful thing about Tiger Woods is that he lifts standards of behaviour among celebrities. No rackets being thrown, no hotel rooms being trashed, no rows with the umpire, and certainly no indiscretions on Sunset Boulevard. He plays to this new world of older values.

Those values will show through increasingly in politics. It is fascinating that already people are suggesting that this young man, just 21, will some day become president of the United States. When can know, but at least it is not an absurd suggestion. If that were to happen, 20 or 30 years from now, think of the implications for politics: that voters want people to represent them who are decent, hard-working, focused, honourable – plus, of course, famous and rich.

Blair's deafening silence on the Euro

As usual, the worst are full of passionate intensity while the best lack all conviction. The single currency is as important as the foamingly passionate anti-Europeans say it is: and the timid determination of the pro-Europeans to keep it out of this campaign is a disgrace.

It isn't, after all, about whose head should gleam on the coins, or what words are written on waxy notes. It is about national destiny, jobs, inflation and security. Now is it a far-off decision, which can be put off for years ahead by the next government. It matters. It looms. And the strange thing is this: the more we agree with John Major's instincts about the single currency, the harder it becomes in vote for his party.

Major has been proven right, first in negotiating the single-currency opt-out, and second in sticking by his official line of "negotiate, then decide". His wily and pragmatic attitude at Maastricht may go down as his most significant historic achievement, greater than his involvement in the Irish peace process. It puts a brake on what would otherwise have been a clear process of British disengagement from the EU.

But the great problem he now has is that there is only one person left in British politics who is able to implement the Major plan. And that person isn't John Major. It is Tony Blair.



Andrew Marr Major has been proven right. His wily and pragmatic approach may be his most significant legacy

But Blair seems to resist the idea. Both he and Peter Mandelson insisted yesterday that the single currency should not be an issue, because the two main parties agreed on the wait-and-see approach: both thought it would be difficult to join early, and both promise a referendum before joining.

So, their argument ran, let us stop talking about the damn thing and concentrate on Tory divisions instead. Very convenient, no doubt, but wrong in logic. First, there is a still a real policy difference between the big parties: which is that the Conservatives see a constitutional problem with joining and Labour doesn't.

Labour would rather the issue wasn't highlighted. Yet the line under Blair has been clear: membership of the single currency is something to be decided on economic, not political, grounds. Will it be good for exporters, inward investment, jobs, inflation? If yes, join; if no, don't. The problem with this straightforward-seeming approach is that more and more of the serious analysis suggests that the strict economic assessment may take many years to judge, and that the case for membership cannot be disentangled from politics.

This may be causing Labour to flinch. The current formula is that Labour would make the judgement "in the national interest", which is bland to the

point of being meaningless: so far as I am aware no one is suggesting that it should be based on the interests of the Pope, American Express or the Church of Rome.

And yesterday Blair said there was no "insuperable" constitutional barrier to joining, gently implying that there may be, after all, some kind of chest-high, prickly impediment. He also made much of the triple lock against an early decision – Cabinet, Parliament and referendum. These are small rhetorical points, perhaps, but the general impression was of an unwillingness to surrender the pound.

Yet, behind this, the essential difference remains. The Tories have a great phalanx of senior and junior politicians who would not join under any circumstances, because they believe it would mean the end of British sovereignty. Labour, despite its protestations of convergence, doesn't agree. One could let us enter.

And the other party, the Tories, couldn't. Major and the Conservative high command are chirpily enthusing about the democracy and freedom of their party in allowing candidates to state honestly their anti-EMU views in election manifestos. Since hundreds are queuing up to do so, this is useful opportunism, an understandable defensive manoeuvre which appears to be liberal and

refreshing. But it is also hokey. How would the Tory high command feel about its candidates taking opposing lines on the future of tax, on mortgage relief, on privatisation, law and order or the Union? It's a funny notion of party unity that demands adherence to the agreed policies, except on the most important question of all.

At every key moment in the political history of the past few years, it has been the Conservative anti-Europeans who have nudged the party. Now it is happening again. And the net effect of all these independent-minded manifestos chugging from the fax machines is that, if the Conservatives were re-elected, Britain couldn't join the single currency – whatever the costs of staying out. There will be a great majority of committed, implacable anti-EMU people on the Tory benches. No Tory premier could bypass them.

Let us dwell on the implications of that. What if – if – staying out meant considerably higher interest rates, and the failure of many firms as a result? What if the effect on inward investment was as bleak as the warnings from, for instance, Hiroshi Okuda of Toyota, Jürgen Gehrels of Siemens (which is building a big microchip factory here), Niall FitzGerald of Unilever, or the managers of New Holland, the world's biggest tractor

manufacturer, which has a plant in Basildon? What if it became clear that EMU membership was becoming synonymous with membership of the EU itself – that staying out meant leaving the union and negotiating a new trading relationship with irritated and impatient ex-partners?

These are neither inconceivable questions, nor inconceivable. They are arguments that any pragmatic, prosperity-minded Tory government would have to weigh against the alternative (and good) arguments against the single currency. Yet this Conservative Party, if it was returned to office, couldn't.

It means the much-vanted referendum is, under a fifth Tory administration, a dead letter: we would never get that far. It means that our influence on other EU issues would swiftly decline. It is the ruination of the hopes of the moderate Tory pro-Europeans. What, I wonder, does Kenneth Clarke think? Labour isn't the only party inching its way through this campaign with the help of heroic silences.

There is a bit of problem here, surely. If Major is right about it being in the national interest to wait and see, then the Conservative rank and file, firmly refusing to do either, must be acting against the national interest. Or have I, perhaps, missed something?

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obituaries / gazette

Sir Robert Aitken

Robert Aitken was a great Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham University and a man of culture and kindness who contributed greatly to scholarship, to medicine and to academic life in this and other countries.

He was born in 1901 at Wyndham, 25 miles from the southernmost tip of South Island, New Zealand. His father, a native of Glasgow, was a minister and was moved later to the remote East Coast region in the North Island. It was a hard country in those days with a scattered population and few roads; families usually had to ride across country to visit neighbours. It was at the school in Clishorne that Aitken first met Margaret Kane (Madge) later, in 1929, to become his wife.

He qualified in medicine in 1923 at Otago University College, Dunedin, and after junior posts was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship at Balliol College, Oxford. Two years later he joined the Medical Professor-



Aitken: always a physician

Aitken contributed work on gastric ulcers, hypertension and liver disease.

Four years later he was appointed Regius Professor of Medicine at Aberdeen. He was 38 years old (young for such an appointment in those days). It was not an easy time; the demands of the war soon led to a shortage of medical staff, heavy teaching duties and too little time for research. But Aitken was indefatigable and gave tremendous support to the medical students.

He was 47 when he was asked in 1948 to return to Dunedin as Vice-Chancellor of the newly created University of Otago – the only university in New Zealand with a medical school. He played an important part in the conversion of what had been a university college to a full university. Under his leadership there were major developments in the Science Faculty, Medicine and Physical Education (no doubt

with the All Blacks in mind). It was at this time that Aitken began his interest in the Association of the Universities of the British Commonwealth, to which he was to contribute greatly.

In 1953 he was invited to become the Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham University; to accept was a difficult decision because he and the family had been very happy in New Zealand. I was a Lecturer at Birmingham and had just been awarded a Medical Research Council Fellowship to work in New York. I was astonished when the new Vice-Chancellor, visited our home to ask me to represent the university at the Second Centenary Celebrations of Columbia University that were to take place that autumn. It was characteristic of Aitken that he came personally to see us, and that while I was away for a year he kept in touch with Margaret, my wife, arranged for my superannuation contributions to be paid by the university and when

I returned called me in to learn all about the work I had been doing with André Courmand, one of the pioneers of cardiac catheterisation. He might have been a Vice-Chancellor, but he was always a physician.

In the next 15 years he was to oversee a doubling in the size of the university from 3,000 to 6,500 students, an increase in the annual budget from £1.3m to £7m and an enormous increase in capital expenditure. The Arts Faculty, till then in the middle of the city, was accommodated in a new building on the Edgbaston site. The Staff House was built. There were new buildings for Microbiology, Biochemistry and Electrical Engineering. Departments of East European, West African and Byzantine Studies were created. In accord with the times Social Sciences, Accounting and Local Government Studies were started. With the help of the West Midlands Regional Health Authority un-

der the leadership of Dr Christie Gordon, Departments of Anaesthetics, Psychiatry and Virology were established. They were exciting times.

He was a member and from 1958 to 1961 Chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals through which he made major contributions to university and medical school development throughout the United Kingdom. He was knighted in 1960.

Aitken was meticulous in his interpretation of proper democratic government of the university; he worked closely with the Pro-Chancellor, the Deans of the Faculties and the Senate and he also, ahead of his times, brought students into the fullest participation in the administration that their age, commitments and limited sojourn would allow.

His wife Madge gave him full support and played an important role in those difficult post-war days in the development of

the Wives' Club. The isolation of the wives of staff with children was a matter of deep concern to her. My four-year-old daughter was hugely excited when an invitation to a children's party arrived from the Vice-Chancellor himself.

Even after retirement in 1968 Aitken continued to play an important part in British and Commonwealth University affairs and he was for five years the Deputy Chairman of the University Grants Committee. He and Madge retired to a house with a large garden close to the university. Their son, a teacher in the United States, and their two daughters, one a cytologist at Liverpool, the other a physician with a major interest in rehabilitation, were a constant joy to them.

In 1984 after a stroke Rob Aitken was confined to a wheelchair, but his intellect was unimpaired and he immediately learnt to write with his left hand (no mean feat when aged

83). In 1990 he was 89 and Madge 90. They sent off their last Christmas card – a delightful picture of them sitting together at each other and smiling at each other and underneath "Score 179 not out". The next year Madge died. Rob was grievously upset but faced up to things courageously. He remained remarkably bright and in his own home till a few days before he died.

Owen Wade

Robert Stevenson Aitken, physician and university administrator, born Wyndham, South Island, New Zealand 16 April 1901; Reader in Medicine, British Post-Graduate Medical School, London University 1935-38; Regius Professor of Medicine, Aberdeen University 1939-48; Vice-Chancellor, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand 1948-53; Vice-Chancellor, Birmingham University 1953-63; K 1960; married 1929 Margaret Kane (died 1991); one son, two daughters; died Birmingham 10 April 1997.

Audrey Atterbury

Audrey Atterbury had an important influence, through her long association with *Watch With Mother*, on the development of children's television in the 1950s.

In 1950, Freda Lingstrom, the newly appointed head of BBC children's television, introduced the first of a new series of puppet programmes. Andy Pandy, with his childlike look, his striped clown's costume, and his friends Teddy and Loochy Loo, was an instant success, despite the primitive and somewhat hazardous live production techniques then in use at the BBC's Alexandra Palace studios.

The *Andy Pandy* series were followed by the charismatic *Flowerpot Men*, whose anarchic behaviour and strange language swiftly turned them into one of the great television icons of their time. Next came the *Woodentops*, the friendly family of Dutch dolls with their dog Spot, whose episodic domestic life was in many ways a precursor of the modern television soap. Other series followed, notably *Toytown*, produced by Gordon Murray, and *Jolly Jack Tar*.

The lasting popularity of these puppet series ensured that the *Flowerpot Men* were still being enjoyed by subsequent generations of children into the 1970s. As one of the principal puppeteers, Audrey Atterbury was a vital presence through all the series. Trained by John Wright, the founder of the famous Little Angel Marionette Theatre in Islington, north London, she was from the start a gifted and highly professional puppeteer, able to bring her charges to life despite

the constant technical problems, and the difficulties associated with such dangerous combinations as string puppets and live animals. She also worked regularly with the Little Angel Theatre, sometimes joining arduous European tours.

Audrey Holman was born in London in circumstances that gave no hint of the talents she was to reveal. Her schooling was uneventful, and the outbreak of war found her working for an average adjuster, her great beauty as well as her talents still undiscovered. In the evenings she studied at the Regent Street Polytechnic. There she met Rowley Atterbury, whom she married in 1942.

After his war service in the RAF, he set up a small hand-press printing works, in a garden shed in Kent, and it was there that his wife learned the now virtually extinct skill of setting lead type in a composing stick. This was the foundation of her life-long interest in the graphic arts and the art of book-illustration in particular.

From that garden shed grew the *Westerham Press*, and her association with it only came to an end by a chance meeting in a train with Freda Lingstrom, who encouraged her to become a puppeteer, and thus a vital member of the *Watch With Mother* team.

Despite the all-absorbing nature of her puppet work, she still found time for other activities. It was at the same time that she began to study and collect British pottery and porcelain. She became an evening class lecturer, and started a long association with Morley College Ceramic Circle for

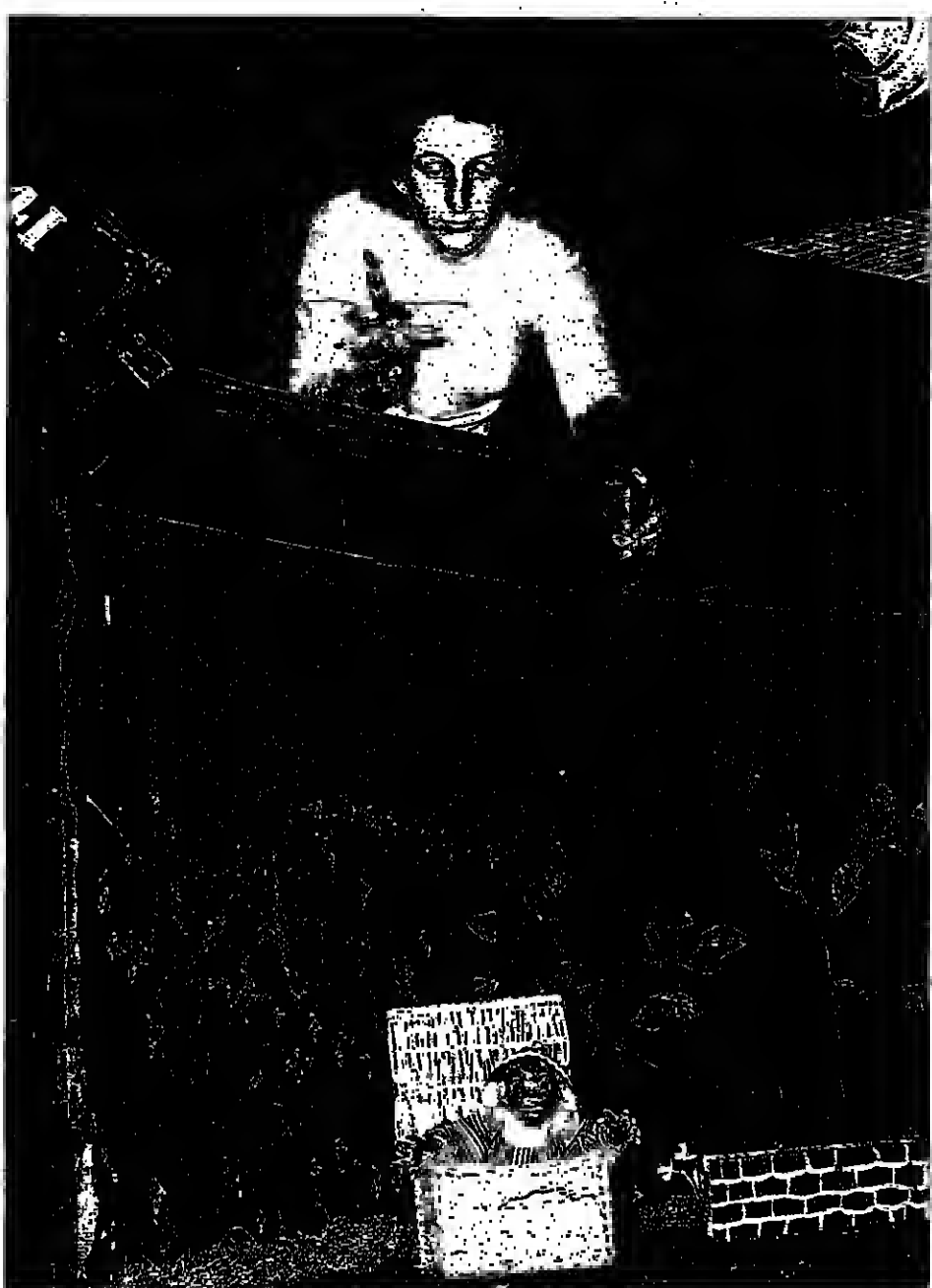
which she was a committee member and secretary for 18 years.

This led her to join the now famous Keele University Ceramic Summer School, then, in the mid-1960s, in its infancy. From this grew the internationally respected Northern Ceramic Society, of which she was a member from the start. Throughout this period, she pursued ceramics assiduously, forming a collection that reflected her extraordinary knowledge and her wide diversity of interests. In her house, pottery from the late 18th century sat happily side by side with pieces from the 1950s, but her main area of interest was the then unfashionable art pottery of the late 19th century, and she was a pioneer enthusiast for the wares made by now famous names such as Doulton and Moorcroft.

Pottery led her into the world of antique dealing, and she was a regular presence on early Friday mornings at Bermondsey market in London. Later, she worked for a number of antique dealers, and then, about ten years ago she joined Christie's as one of their "angels", becoming the longest serving and most respected member of that team of lady salesroom assistants. Indeed, she was hard at work at King Street and South Kensington a couple of weeks before her death.

Nicolas Barker

Audrey Selma Holman, puppeteer and ceramics collector, born London 19 April 1921; married 1942 Rowley Atterbury (marriage dissolved; one son); died London 8 April 1997.



Hazardous live production: Atterbury and Andy Pandy in the BBC studio at Alexandra Palace, c1950

Sir Jack Dear

Jack Dear was one of Barbados's best-known, best liked, most respected citizens; and in one sense certainly its most prominent.

Educated at Harrison College, Barbados and Pembroke College, Cambridge, Dear was called to the Bar, Middle Temple, in 1947, and admitted to practice in Barbados a year later. He became a powerful advocate – West Indian oratory powered by a shrewd legal brain. His services were much sought after – once, to his pleasure, by the so-called Anguillan rebels, when Britain's ill-fated invasion of that island raised spectres of treason trials, at the very least. There weren't any, of course; but he would have greatly relished the chance.

Politically he was a major force behind the Barbados Labour Party, and served as a senator from 1964 to 1966. His standing in the legal profession was such that in 1968 he became the first President of the Organisation of Commonwealth Bar Associations.

He was deeply involved in all aspects of Barbadian life – a man of great generosity (the Museum and the National Trust of Barbados owe much to his support), a crusader for racial harmony, and the most loyal of friends, of whom there were untold numbers. For he was also a jolly man, raconteur, wit, avid reader, excellent company. His knighthood in 1996, for his contribution to the development of the legal profession and charitable causes, was universally applauded.

But that was not all. Jack Dear had another, very personal, claim to local fame. He came from a family of renowned trenchermen, but became the mightiest eater of them all.

In his prime – fit, athletic – he challenged one Mango, a famed eater of Trinidad, to a contest involving eating, twice, a six-course dinner. Mango gave up after nine courses; Jack ate all twelve, and then – so it is said – gobbled up Mango's last three. Gargantuan, incarnate in the Caribbean.

Sadly, he never overcame his addiction to food. His increasingly vast bulk became less and less mobile; unsurprisingly his health deteriorated in tandem, until he could barely stand in court, nor occupy other than an extremely outside chair. Yet to the end he remained himself cheerful, gregarious, uncomplaining – and still hungry.

Rabelais represented Gargantua as a mighty eater... as befits a giant, but also as a studious, athletic, good-humoured and peace-loving prince". There you have it: Jack Dear to the life.

William Bell

John Stanley Bruce Dear, lawyer and politician, born St Lucia 18 July 1925; called to the Bar, Middle Temple 1947; QC 1963; Senator, Barbados 1964-66; First President, Organisation of Commonwealth Bar Associations 1968; CHB 1981; KCMG 1996; married 1949 Jeanne Rawlins (one son, two daughters); died Bridgetown, Barbados 2 April 1997.

Desmond Lyons

Desmond Lyons, former Production Editor of what journalists have come to call "the old" – i.e. pre-Maxwell – *Daily Mirror*, was one of a vanishing breed of ebullient yet highly professional Fleet Street characters.

Born in Bray, Co Wicklow, he was brought to Bristol at the age of seven and sent to Prior Park School, which he hated. He subsequently read law at Bristol University – grounding which stood him in good stead when holding his corner, which he did most spiritedly, with office libel lawyers.

He joined the Navy in 1943, becoming a sub-lieutenant and taking part in the Normandy landings. Later he served in Malaysia, Singapore and Java, where he played the piano in a brothel. With this experience and his law studies, he was now doubly qualified to become a journalist.

After the war he was taken on by the South London News Agency, when he shared a flat with Sir David English, as he now is, the future Editor and Chairman of the *Daily Mail*. He then moved north to work on the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* and the Manchester editions of the *News Chronicle*, *Daily Herald* and *Daily Express* before returning to London as a *Daily Express* sub-editor. He switched to the old *Daily Sketch* and then after a brief stint on the *Observer*, which he loathed – "bunch of limp-wristed toadies" – he at last found his home on the *Daily Mirror*, where he spent 11 years, first as Night Sub, then Chief Features Sub and finally Production Editor.

An newspaperman, Lyons was probably at his happiest as Chief Features Sub, when he presided over a table of motley talents who ranged from the holshie to the eccentric.

He was in his element arguing with the office lawyer or quizzing a wretched columnist's slipshod grammar. A scrupulous and knowledgeable guardian of the English language, he had an elaborate points system with most of the paper's writers whereby, if he caught them out on a grammatical slip or they could prove him wrong, the victor in the debate was awarded so many points, a score of ten being rewarded by a drink at the *Mirror* pub across the street, the Stab in the Back – "and none of your small ones" he would crow, having flushed out a dan-

gling participle. He was one of the few backroom boys who dared face up to the formidable Marjorie Proops with a crisp analysis of her faltering syntax. She came to respect his judgement and accept his corrections meekly.

Off duty, Lyons was a rollicking companion, whether in the old Press Club, the Stab, El Vino until he was barred for some misdemeanour, or the other Fleet Street watering holes. He was greatly in demand at leaving parties for his prowess as a jazz pianist which had earned him, in his Navy days, the title "Five King of Java". In his South London apprenticeship he had played professionally at the Windmill Theatre, and with his vast repertoire he would happily thump away at a pub piano for as long as the drinks were still flowing. Des Lyons took early retirement in 1976 after some heart



Lyons: 'Five King of Java'

trouble and moved to Padstow, Cornwall, where he ran a controversial weekly column on the *Cornwall Courier*, and later did phone-in shows for Radio Cornwall. He kept in touch with some of his *Daily Mirror* colleagues with characteristically pungent letters but was never nostalgic about the old hot metal days. He did, however, regret the passing of the times when Fleet Street was fun, and the Five King of Java regularly tinkled the keys at the Stab having given a misapplied gerund its come-uppance.

Keith Waterhouse

Desmond Danne Lyons, journalist, born Bray, Co Wicklow 8 May 1925; married 1955 Ada Duckworth (three sons, two daughters, and one son deceased; marriage dissolved 1981); 1981 Anne Gregory; died Earlestone, Wiltshire 8 April 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

TURNER: On 10 April, to Lynn (nee Chandler) and John, a daughter, Olivia Jane, a sister for Andrew.

DEATHS

JONES: Mary Peggy, At the Airedale General Hospital, Stainley, West Yorkshire, 12 April, at the age of 85. Funeral at Oskwold Crematorium, Keighley, on Tuesday 22 April at 2pm. Flowers from the family and closest friends only, please. Donations if desired may be left in collection box at crematorium or sent direct to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire.

RIGHTER: William Harvey, at home on the evening of 14 April, of cancer, faced with characteristic courage and elegance of spirit. Adored husband, friend and mentor to Rosemary. May flights of angels sing him to his rest. Cremation private, but a service of thanksgiving for his life at the Temple Church, Inner Temple Lane, off Fleet Street, London EC4A, at 2pm on Wednesday 23 April. No flowers, but donations if desired to the Royal Academy, Piccadilly, London SW1.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5UL, telephoned to 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at 62.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette notices must be submitted in writing for faxed and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr L. J. Muthin and Miss S. A. Knight. The engagement is announced between Laurence, son of Mr and Mrs Henry Muthin, of Hampstead, London, and Susan, daughter of Mr and Mrs Keith Knight, of Malvern, Worcestershire.

Birthdays

Queen Margrethe of Denmark, 57; Lord Abbot, former president, 64; Admiral Sir Peter Austin, 76; Miss Jeanie Bacon, director-general, Health and Safety Executive, 52; Miss Joan Bakewell, television presenter, 64; Lord Cawley, deputy chairman, 64; Lord Zouche Wood, 57; Sir John Harvey-Jones, former chairman, ICI, 73; Mr Michael Hirst, former chief constable, Leicestershire, 59; Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, 73; Mr Richard Kershaw, broadcaster, 63; Miss Ruth Madoc, actress, 54; Mr Spike Milligan, comedian and writer, 78; Mr Jimmy Osmond, singer, 34; Sir Geoffrey Owen, former editor, *Financial Times*, 63; Mr Frank Page, journalist and broadcaster, 67; Mr Gerry Rafferty, singer and songwriter, 50; Mr James Rant, Judge Ad-

vocate General of the Army and RAF, 61; Sir John Robson, former ambassador to Norway, 67; Miss Gabriella Sabatini, tennis player, 27; Miss Constance Shacklock, operatic singer, 84; Miss Dussy Springfield, singer, 57; Dr William Stearn, consultant botanist, 86; Mr Leo Tinsman, statesman, 75; Professor Barbara Tizard, educationist, 71; Sir Peter Ustinov, actor and writer, 76.

Anniversaries

Birthe Frans van Mieris the Elder, painter, 1638; Sir Hans Sloane, physician and naturalist, 1660; Ford Madox Brown, painter, 1821; Anatole France (Jacques-Anatole François Thibault), novelist, 1844; Wilbur Wright, aviation pioneer, 1867; John Millington Synge, poet and playwright, 1871; Sir Charles Spence Chapman, composer, 1889; Enrico (Enrico) Mancini, composer, 1924; Deaths: Aphim Behm, playwright and novelist, 1689; Marie Tussaud, waxworks show proprietor, 1830; Bernadette Soubirous, St Bernadette of Lourdes, 1879. On this day: Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, was decisively defeated at Culloden by Cumberland, 1746; the island of Malta was awarded the George Cross by King George VI, 1942; the Organisation for European

Economic Co-operation (EEC) was set up, 1948. Today is the Feast Day of St Bernadette, St Conrado, St Drogo or Droon, St Enczart, St Fructuosus Braga, St Joseph Benedict Labre, St Magnus of Orkney, St Optatus and the Martyrs of Saragossa, St Paternus or Pairs of Avranches and St Turibius of Astorga.

Lectures

National Gallery: Alexander Sturgis, "Couples (III): Gainsborough, Mr and Mrs William Hallett (*The Morning Walk*)", 1794. 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Scilly Dorrer, "Birds and Beasts in Medieval Art", 2.30pm. British Museum: George Hart, "Roman Egypt from Augustus to the fall of Paganism", 6.30pm.

Royal Society of Medicine

Lord Woolf of Barnes, Master of the Rolls, delivered the Royal Society of Medicine's Nuffield Lecture yesterday evening in the Society's House, London W1. His subject was "Medicine and Justice". Sir Christopher Paine, President of the Society, and Lady Paine, received the guests at a reception and dinner held afterwards.

SES. Princess Alexandra attends a concert and dinner for the Volvo Foundation at the Royal College of Music, London SW7. Changing of the Guard The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, (11am). No 7 Company Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Welsh Guard.

Possession order for water charges default

LAW REPORT

Lambeth London Borough Council v Thomas; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Kennedy, Mr Justice Mance) 25 March 1997

16 April 1997

A council was entitled to adopt a policy whereby, for the benefit of all its tenants, it collected water charges from them on behalf of a water company and accounted to the water company on a discounted basis, and the resulting obligation on a tenant to pay water charges to the council was an obligation of the tenancy, breach of which might lead to possession proceedings.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the council's appeal against the decision of Judge James at Lambeth County Court not to make a possession order against the respondent.

The respondent was a tenant of the council. The council had sought a possession order on ground 1 of Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985, which applied where "any rent lawfully due from the tenant has not been paid or any obligation of the tenancy has been broken or not performed". The reason given was that rent and other charges, the bulk of which were water charges, were outstanding. The judge held that the water charges constituted rent for the purposes of the

1985 Act and gave judgment in the sum claimed, but refused to make a possession order on the ground that it would not be reasonable, save in exceptional circumstances, to do so for the purpose of enforcing a local authority's agreement to collect water charges.

Christopher Baker (Council Solicitor) for the council; the respondent in person.

Mr Justice Mance said that the council had power to enter into an agreement for the collection and recovery, on behalf of a water company, of any water charges payable or fixed for the supply of water by the water company.

The council had entered into such an agreement, by which it claimed and sought to collect from its tenants the amounts fixed by the water company in respect of their particular properties. It accounted to the water company on a lump sum and discounted basis, designed to mean that the council achieved a surplus for the benefit of its housing revenue, which ensured to the benefit of all its tenants by enabling

the council to keep rents down.

The effect of the agreement between the council as landlord and the respondent as tenant was to entitle the council to claim from the respondent the charges it had arranged with the water company to collect. The water charges which were thus contractually outstanding from the respondent to the council were either "rent" or an "obligation of the tenancy" so that ground 1 of Schedule 2 to the 1985 Act applied, and it was unnecessary in the present case to consider between the two separate concepts.

Whilst there was force in the submission made on behalf of the council that rent in the present context bore an expanded meaning, it was preferable to leave any final determination of the question whether water charges were rent until a case arose in which such a decision was essential.

The test adopted in *Gower v The Postmaster-General* (1887) 57 LT 527 in deciding whether a particular obligation ran with the land was whether it was "merely collateral to the land" or "touches or con-

cerns the thing that was demised". In the present case, since the water charges were due from the tenant as occupier of the demised premises and user of water there, the obligation on the tenant to pay water charges to the council resulting from its agreement with the water company must be regarded as touching and concerning the demised premises, and thus as an "obligation of the tenancy", even if not as rent.

In those circumstances the judge was clearly right to conclude that he had jurisdiction to make a possession order under section 84(2) of the 1985 Act. The only question, in view of the language of section 84(2)(a), was whether in refusing to conclude that it was reasonable to make such an order the judge had erred.

The judge's approach had been wrong in principle and influenced by irrelevant considerations. The only reasonable order would have been a suspended possession order. Satisfactory arrangements for the payment of arrears having since been made, there was, however, no purpose in making such an order.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

25 مارس من الأمل

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING		DOLLAR			D-MARK
Country		1 month	3 months	1 year	
US	1.6254	75	23-30	1 000	-
Canada	2.2875	61-58	172-162	1 381	29-26
Germany	2.3675	61-58	172-162	1 381	29-26
France	9.475	22-21	67-61	5 600	110-104
Italy	2771 1	24-22	71-64	7 900	265-335
Spain	164	89-86	266-238	1 025	94-85
EDU	1.4413	24-23	70-69	1 127	11-12
Belgium	58 141	12-10	41-35	35 770	75
Denmark	10 734	12-10	41-35	6 800	99-79
Netherlands	10 734	12-10	41-35	6 800	99-79
Finland	10 734	12-10	41-35	6 800	99-79
Japan	11 035	51	15-9	15 400	54
Norway	11 386	260-218	710-670	7 011	90-78
Portugal	205	25-23	81-71	1 011	118-118
Sweden	25 020	25-23	81-71	7 732	117-115
Switzerland	2 391	30-84	274-32	1 413	49-46
Australia	2 094	24	144	1 256	84-16
Hong Kong	7 900	25-23	81-71	1 011	118-118
Malaysia	4 055	0	0	2 513	77-80
New Zealand	2 304	25-23	74-85	1 457	52-54
South Africa	2 304	25-23	74-85	1 457	52-54
Singapore	2 345	0	0	1 440	77-80

[illegible]

Tourist Rates

£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys
Austria (Dollars)	France (Francs)	New Zealand (Dollars)
Australia (Schillings)	Germany (Mark)	Norway (Krone)
Belgium (Francs)	Greece (Dracmas)	Portugal (Escudos)
Canada (Dollars)	Hong Kong (Dollars)	Spain (Pesetas)
Cyprus (Pounds)	Ireland (Pence)	Sweden (Kronor)
Denmark (Kroner)	Italy (Lira)	Switzerland (Francs)
Finland (Markka)	Japan (Yen)	Turkey (Lira)
		United Kingdom (Pounds)

Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Bank	8.00%	Prime	8.75%
France		Discount	5.00%
Intervention	3.12%	Fed Funds	5.25%
Italy		Spain	
Discount	7.5%	10 Day Repo	5.75%
Swiss		Sweden	
Advances	2.70%	Discount	1.00%
		London	

Bond Yields

Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %	Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %
UK	7.0%	7.24	7.25%	7.54	Netherlands	8.25%	4.77	5.75%	7.71
US	6.63%	6.66	6.21%	6.67	Spain	7.91%	5.95	5.75%	7.71
Japan	5.53%	1.92	2.90%	2.30	Italy	6.25%	6.99	6.75%	7.59
Australia	10.04%	7.42	6.78%	1.86	Belgium	9.0%	4.58	6.25%	5.82
Germany	8.0%	4.70	6.0%	6.82	Sweden	13.0%	3.78	5.50%	7.05
France	4.75%	4.74	5.55%	5.59	ECU bond	6.0%	4.60	5.50%	6.17

	O'Night	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8
Swing CDE	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8
Local Authority Depts	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8
Discount Market Depts	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8
Treasury Bills (Buy)	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8
Banker CDE	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8
ECU Linked Dep	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8	5 1/8

Contract		Settlement price	High/Low	East/Cont'd	Open Interest
Long Gilt	(Jun 97)	109.24	108.28-109.13	69072	116709
German Bund	(Jun 97)	101.67	101.67-101.73	29612	29612
Italian Bond	(Jun 97)	173.02	172.05-173.35	7,582	11,021
Japan Govt	(Jun 97)	125.64	125.67-126.34	1,018	1,018
3 Mth Sterling	(Sep 97)	91.63	90.45-91.40	13,995	18,745
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Sep 97)	93.17	93.18-93.18	14,189	816,57
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Sep 97)	92.76	92.76-92.76	2,918	2,918
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Sep 97)	90.78	90.70-90.76	2,527	2,527
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Sep 97)	90.28	90.25-90.28	1,049	1,049
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Sep 97)	90.27	90.28-90.28	13,576	13,576
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Sep 97)	90.28	90.28-90.28	600	600
3 Mth Eurodollar	(Sep 97)	90.28	90.28-90.28	5,017	5,017
3 Mth ECU	(Jun 97)	98.04	98.05-98.08	5,575	5,575
3 Mth ECU	(Jun 97)	95.86	95.87-95.87	1,583	1,583
3 Mth ECU	(Jun 97)	95.86	95.86-95.73	314	314
FTSE 100	(Jun 97)	4,314.0	4,318.0-4,375.0	13,850	61,128

Liffe FTSE Index Option					
Settlement price: 4287	closing offer price				Call/Put Total/void
Series	4200	4250	4300	4350	
Apr	102/2	58/7	23/25	5/62	..
May	146/40	110/54	79/74	53/100	..
Jun	184/71	150/86	119/108	93/132	..
Jul	217/68	180/103	149/124	121/146	110/161

Commodities

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange						
Commodity	Cash	3 months	Volume	AMEX Stocks	chg	
Aluminum 60	1616 1/2	1332.0-5.4	18069	802775	-1675 100	
Aluminum Alloy	1620 3/4	1459 1/2	1616	70779	-200 150	
Aluminum 99.95-99.99	1616 1/2	1470	1470	2125	345 0	
Lead 80.0-84.0	820 3/4	1152 1/2	19525	4400	0 0	
Lead 72.0-85.0	720 1/2	2550	81024	11852	375 0	
Lead 85.0-95.0	850 1/2	600	903	100	0 0	
Zinc 120.0-125.5	1206 1/2	9069	40640	100	120 0	
Iron Ore	22 1/2	22 1/2	15			
Steel Wire Rod	12 1/2	12 1/2	15			

Stock volumes & changes in price as of 11:45 A.M.

PRECIOUS METALS							
pm fix fee	A	C	Coins	S	C	S	C
Platinum	\$64.50	223.85	Britannia	365	275	Kruggerands	343.354
Palladium	130.50	32.40	Britannia 5 oz	188	116	Norob	80.89
Silver spot	470.0	269.0	Britannia 25 oz	93	57	Sovels	365.387
Gold Bull	343.00	210.88	Britannia 10 oz	41	25	Maple Leaf	345.353

[illegible]

Other Softs (Agricultural)				Source: Citibank			
Mar	Maize (No.3)	Shorne	109.0	Apr	Soya Oil	FL100	103.00
Mar-Apr	Copra (1)	Shorne	142.00	Apr	Coconut Oil (1)	Shorne	730.00
May	Copra (NY)	UScents	71.35	May	Sunflower Oil	Shorne	unq
unq	Wool	America	unq	May-Jun	Rapeseed Oil	FL100	100.00
Aug	Rubber	Monting	592.00	Aug-Nov	Gum Arabic	Shorne	964.00

ENERGY										
Brent Crude		(\$/barrel)	Gasoil	(\$/tonne)	WTI	Products 1		(\$/tonne)		
MPE	5.89ppm	%chg	Yr ago	MPE	cbase	+0.2%	May	19.80	Spot Off West North Europe	197.200
Jun	18.06	-0.14	Apr	166.25	+0.25	May	19.80	Pump Unleaded	157.200	
Jan	18.36	-0.04	May	165.50	+0.25	Jun	19.80	Naphtha	154.185	
Jul	18.49	-0.02	Jun	183.25	+0.50	Jul	19.86	EC Gasoil	162.170	
Vol	320K	Index	18.13	Vol:	7427	Aug	19.90	Heavy Fuel Oil	73.91	

COMMODITY INDICES							
"OSCI Indices	Base date	+/-Spot	+/-Day Chg	Date 31st	+/-Wtd chg	21st	% Yr chg
Index	1972=100	191.78	+1.14	215.25	+10.01	213.12	+10.01
Agricultural	1972=100	284.03	+5.36	293.24	+14.10	310.19	+14.80
Energy	1972=100	69.08	+2.28	72.23	+2.24	72.19	+16.79
Industrial	1972=150	175.34	-0.32	169.79	+5.60	168.01	0.00
Livestock	1972=100	134.77	+0.47	191.03	+1.85	185.05	+5.25
Precious Metals	1972=100	441.25	-0.18	493.54	-4.19	505.08	+12.75

Stock	Bid	Mid	Offer	Stock	Bid	Mid	Offer
Abbey Equity Bar 4	282.2		301.3	Legal & General Managed Account	1056.9		1059.9
Abbey International Bar 4	215.5		208.8	London & Manchester Flexible Acc	681.1		

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EXECUTIVE
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see page 20

Holiday Drive

business & city

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Clark family in sell-off bonanza

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Around 400 family shareholders who control the Clarks shoe business are set to receive a large windfall payout after the company sold its factory outlet retail business yesterday for £80m.

C&J Clark, Britain's best known shoe business, is selling three factory outlets to property group MEPC and will distribute £53m of the proceeds to its shareholders. As the family controls 70 per cent of the company, this means that family members will receive an average payout of £93,000 each. The windfall is thought to be the equivalent of 10 years of dividend payments.

The 6,000 Clarks employees



Lance Clark, Director who has served 37 years at Clarks

who own shares in the company will also benefit from the deal. The payout will provide a boost for the small Somerset town of Street which has been the centre of Clarks operations since 1823.

As some shareholders are thought to control up to 2 per cent of Clarks, the biggest payouts could be as much as £1m. The biggest beneficiaries are likely to be some of the family mem-

bers with seats on the board. These include Roger Pedder, the chairman who married into the family, Lance Clark, the managing director of its Bakers shoes subsidiary and Caroline Gould, a non-executive director. Hugh Pym, the ITN news reporter is also a shareholder.

However, Mr Pedder said that the company's Quaker tradition was likely to rule out a mass Somerset spending spree. "I think you'll find quite a lot of it will be reinvested," he said. "Quakers regard themselves as custodians of wealth rather than consumers of it."

He declined to reveal the level of his own payout though the Clarks annual report shows he is one of the largest shareholders on the board with 3.5 million shares. Mr Clark controls nearly 9 million.

He also denied that the payout was a means of pacifying family shareholders who have been waiting for a stock market flotation of the company since they turned down a hostile bid by Berisford International in 1993.

"We will go public as and when it is appropriate. There is no pressure to float and this sale has no bearing on it."

Clarks shareholders voted against the Berisford takeover on condition that the company sought a stock market flotation by 1998. That deadline has since been extended with shareholder support, Mr Pedder says.

Mr Pedder also said Clarks might be interested in buying parts of Sears footwear interests which include Dolcis, Shoe City and Cable & Co. He said that Clarks had held talks on a possible deal with Sears and that it was keeping the matter under review. "If something became available at the right price then it might be possible," he said.

Clarks is selling its factory outlets centres in Street in Som-



Profitable Street: Some Clark shareholders might be in line to receive £1m from the sale

erset, Kendal in Cumbria and its 50 per cent share in the centre in Doncaster. Factory outlets consist of well known brand name retailers who sell goods at discounted prices. Pioneered in the United States, they have become popular here and there are now 13 in the UK.

Clarks three outlets made profits of around £3m last year but the company has been keen to sell them in order to concentrate on its core shoe re-

tailoring and manufacturing interests.

The sale will need to be approved by shareholders at the group's annual meeting next month. The approval of the High Court will also be required for the scheme of arrangement needed to effect the deal. Shareholders should receive their cash in July or August.

MEPC said it was buying the outlets to increase the proportion of retail property in its

portfolio. As it already owns a factory outlet in North Shields it now controls four of Britain's 13 centres.

Clarks also announced its results for 1995/96 yesterday showing a net loss for the year of £3.2m. Operating profits fell from £35.8m to £33.6m but there was a £30.4m charge to cover the cost of closing five factories and a reduction in central overheads, largely at the Street operations in Somerset. Group

sales were up slightly at £727.3m. Clarks has been undergoing a fundamental restructuring under chief executive Tim Parker who was brought in from Kenwood Appliances. Last year it cut 1,400 jobs, a tenth of the total.

Commenting on the results, Mr Pedder said: "In the context of a turbulent year for the shoe industry, the results are satisfactory and Clarks has emerged in good shape to face the future."

Wall Street
shakes off
rate jittersDavid Usborne
New York

Wall Street's recent jitters seemed almost forgotten yesterday as encouraging consumer price numbers in the US and a crop of good corporate earnings reports helped blue-chip equities power ahead for a second straight day.

Even during early trading on Monday there had been fears that the Dow Jones industrial average might slip low enough to register a correction of 10 per cent since its March all-time high. The index finally closed 60 points up on Monday, however, and appeared set for an even stronger gain last night.

At midday, the index was up by more than 90 points with trading curbs in place. Bond prices, meanwhile, firmed significantly in New York with the yield on the benchmark 30-year Treasury sliding back from Monday's high of 7.17 per cent - its highest finish since July - to 7.09 per cent.

The return of the bullish sentiment was aided in particular by unexpectedly mild US inflation figures. The data helped ease fears that inflation was once again creeping into the US economy.

The Labor Department said the Consumer Price Index rose by only 0.1 per cent in March, after being up by 0.3 per cent in February. Even when the volatile food and energy sectors were taken out of the formula, the core rate was up by just 0.2 per cent, as it was the month before. The CPI numbers con-

trasted with the most recent US wholesale inflation figures which helped send the markets into a spin on Friday. They showed a core rate of 0.4 per cent.

Commenting on the CPI number, Kevin Flanagan of Dean Witter Reynolds said: "It doesn't live up to investors' worst fears, which is why the market is getting a nice little bounce off it."

Investors are likely none the less to remain wary of the next meeting of the Federal Reserve Open Markets Committee, set for 20 May. Last month, the Fed nudged up a key short-term lending rate by a quarter point and many in the market feel certain that another small increase is likely next time.

Traders meanwhile drew additional encouragement yesterday from the earnings news. Among components of the Dow, Caterpillar exceeded expectations while Eastman Kodak and Johnson & Johnson met expectations. In the banking sector both Chase Manhattan and Citicorp both posted strong results.

Although Intel, the chip-making giant, reported impressive first-quarter results after the close on Monday, its stock was suffering yesterday because of worries that the second quarter may be flat. In heavy morning trading, Intel was off 3 1/4 at 130 5/8. The slide of Intel stock meant that the Nasdaq was not enjoying the same forward burst as the other markets yesterday. At midday it was up 2.67.

Fresh challenge
to UK over single
currency opt-outDiane Coyle
Economics Editor

Countries that do not join the single currency will be expected to join the revamped Exchange Rate Mechanism, according to the European Monetary Institute. Its insistence on ERM membership for non-participants could prove controversial in the UK if it opts to remain outside when the decision is taken early next year.

In a strongly worded annual report, the forerunner of the European Central Bank also said countries that relied on one-off gimmicks to get their budget deficit below the 3 per cent of GDP ceiling would not qualify to join. The report meant the single currency was more likely to consist of a core group of countries excluding Italy, according to financial analysts.

"This says no to Italy without directly spelling it out," said Alison Cottrell at Paine Webber. Richard Reid, chief economist at UBS, said: "It was a surprise the report was not terribly supportive of a broad monetary union. This is the EMI putting a down-payment on its future credibility."

Italian hopes were dealt a separate blow by the OECD's annual report on the economy, which said it would not hit the 3 per cent deficit target even with the one-off measures introduced in the last budget.

The EMI will report jointly with the European Commission a year from now on which countries satisfy the Maastricht

criteria for membership of the single currency. The Commission's forecasts for 1997, due to be published next week, are expected not to play up the prospects for broad membership of the single currency.

The two will nevertheless have to reach agreement by next spring, and economists saw yesterday's report on developments in 1996 as a bid to temper the Commission's political priorities with economic realities. The EMI said the new ERM mechanism would govern rela-

6 This is the
EMI putting a
down-payment
on its future
credibility

tions between the "ins" and the "outs". "Membership would be voluntary, nevertheless, EU member states with a derogation can be expected to join the mechanism," it said.

Ms Cottrell said: "These words were chosen carefully to be as strong as possible. It is presumed that countries will join."

Previously the EMI has insisted that countries would have to be ERM members before qualifying to join EMU, a somewhat less stringent demand. The new presumption would be difficult for the UK to swallow,

especially if the Conservatives were re-elected.

British officials said the tone was not unduly alarming. The UK has always seen the Maastricht Treaty's insistence on ERM membership as a matter for political negotiation.

But economists said the pound's surge during the past six months had reinforced the EMI's position. "It would be perfectly reasonable to demand a period of stability in the exchange rate for the pound," said Graham Bishop, an adviser on European financial affairs at investment bank Salomons.

The EMI also said many countries' efforts to reduce government budget deficits in order to meet the criteria for membership of the single currency had been unsatisfactory. "Sustainable convergence can not be achieved by one-off and accounting measures," said Alexandre Lamfalussy, EMI chairman, in his foreword.

The report picked out Denmark, France, Italy and Portugal for special criticism, as the ratio of government spending to GDP in those countries has continued to rise.

But it said only three - Ireland, the Netherlands and UK - had simultaneously reduced spending, taxes and government borrowing.

The OECD predicted that Italy's budget deficit would fall sharply from last year's 6.8 per cent, but at 3.6 per cent this year would still exceed the Maastricht limit for membership of EMU in the first wave.

'I'm failing to get my message
across' - LucasVarity chiefChris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Victor Rice, chief executive of the Anglo-US engineering group LucasVarity, yesterday admitted he had failed to get across the benefits to investors stemming from last year's £3.2bn merger, in a clear show of his frustration at the company's lacklustre share price performance.

LucasVarity surprised analysts by announcing a 50 per cent increase in distributions to investors to £150m this year, through a combination of share buy-backs and dividends. Analysts said the company had hacked off from its original proposal to abandon dividends altogether in favour of US-style buy-backs, though Mr Rice claimed this had never been on the agenda.

But the news failed to lift the shares, which dropped a further 2.5p at 198p, compared with a 12 month peak of 262p. "It's costing the company an extra 50 per cent to disappoint the market," said one analyst.

Mr Rice said he had hoped the revised dividend policy, coupled with his prediction that profits this year would improve by 20 per cent, would please the markets. "That sounds pretty good to me but obviously I'm not getting the message across. I thought I'd delivered an upbeat message. Obviously I'm failing," he said.

The group also appeared to retreat from moves to change its name. A spokesman said no decisions on a name change would be taken for at least a year and insisted their was "no truth" in suggestions that it

had been due to happen sooner. On top of a 2.25 per cent dividend for the year to the end of January 1997, the group, formed out of last year's merger of car components companies Lucas Industries and Varity, forecast a 4.5p dividend for this year. In addition, LucasVarity said it intended to buy back 3 per cent of its shares during 1997 through occasional market purchases.

Buy-backs generally please investors in the US, who hold about 40 per cent of LucasVarity stock, where the tax advantages of paying dividends are reduced. UK institutional investors had opposed abandoning dividend payouts because they would lose valuable tax credits.

The cost of the buy-backs and dividends would be about £150m, compared with £100m to maintain Lucas's last 7p dividend.

One analyst, who did not want to be named, said the new policy seemed more "imprudent" than the strategy of the old Lucas, which was widely regarded as over-generous.

LucasVarity yesterday revealed a 5 per cent rise in operating profits on a pro-forma basis, to £336m last year. For the eight months as a merged business to the end of January it reported losses of £78.8m after restructuring charges of £250m.

Mr Rice said savings from the merger were coming more swiftly than expected, adding £40m to profits this year, rising to £120m after next year. He also said he expected this year to complete sales of 13 business, all from the old Lucas empire earmarked for disposal. "Everything is going about as smoothly as we could possibly wish."

Victor Rice: Plans £150m of buy-backs and dividends



CalEnergy allows for windfall tax

Michael Harrison

CalEnergy, the US company that took over Northern Electric last December after a bitter takeover battle, has made a provision against paying Labour's windfall tax which is thought to be in the region of £90m-£100m.

The company's 1996 report, released yesterday, shows CalEnergy, one of six US companies to have snapped up a British regional electricity company, has established a liability against the levy in its latest accounts.

CalEnergy would not disclose the size of the provision but its chief financial officer, John Sylvia, said it was in the

middle of a range of estimates by UK analysts. Goldman Sachs estimates that Northern Electric's windfall tax bill will be between £80m and £120m while NatWest Markets put it at between £35m and £125m.

The CalEnergy reports also show that it will make losses for the next 10 years on a contract Northern Electric entered into to buy supplies from Teesside Power, in which it has a 15.4 per cent stake. The 15-year contract set out "escalating purchase prices" which are above the level it pays in the electricity pool. CalEnergy has a similar provision to cover the estimated losses which will result from the contract which was signed in 1993 and runs until 2008.

In a report published last night, NatWest Markets put the size of the windfall tax at £50m but says that at that level it would not derail dividend growth or future plans of the utilities.

The analysis shows that by calculating the levy on the basis of shareholder returns up to 1996, Labour could shift almost one-third of the tax burden to foreign companies that have taken over British utilities in the past three years.

If the cut-off point was 1996 then overseas owners of electricity and water companies would pay £1.545bn of the levy. If the tax liability was calculated up to 1995, this sum falls to £884m.

Lack of rain
threatens the
nation's cuppa

Magnus Grimond

Black clouds, or rather the lack of them, are gathering round one of Britain's most important institutions. Under the combined weight of a severe drought in Kenya, shortage of rain in Sri Lanka and a late harvest in north India, tea prices are soaring. Since 1995, the cost of a kilogram of tea from Kenya, supplier of half the 170,000 tonnes imported into the UK every year, has doubled to around £2 (£1.22).

The threat to the nation's cuppa has yet to register on the election campaign trail, but politicians may have to sit up and take notice: the impact on the electorate could be far-reaching. The British drink 185 million cups of the warm and wet stuff every day, more than the whole of North America and the rest of Europe put together. The London-based Tea Council claims that 42 per cent of every man-made beverage consumed in the UK is still tea, making it the second most popular drink after water.

But the experts say there is no need to rush out and stockpile. Mervyn Lewis of the Tea Council yesterday moved swiftly to calm the nerves of tea lovers. "Although 51 per cent of our tea comes from Kenya, the average

tea bag has 20 to 30 different teas in it. The blending companies have to ride the prices out and may have bought ahead. It remains to be seen how long this will last. It all adds up to a fairly complicated matrix."

The £640m market for tea in Britain also remains "massively competitive" and it is very difficult to detect any price rises coming through, he says. At 2.7p a cup, tea remains "ridiculously good value".

But it is all causing a lot of grief for James Finlay, one of Britain's dwindling band of plantation companies which, with Unilever's Brooke Bond, is one of the two biggest growers in Kenya. The Glasgow-based group saw its shares dip 9.5p to 95p yesterday after it warned that results for this year would be hit by the Kenyan drought.

Although rain had now started to fall, Pat Lockett, finance director, said it would take time for the tea bushes to recover. Whether current prices, the highest for four years, were maintained was "in the lap of the gods", he said.

All this is ironic, given that last year's 30 per cent rise in Kenyan prices helped Finlay yesterday report profits more than tripled, from £3.62m to £12m for last year.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
FTSE 100	4286.80	+35.10	+0.8	4444.30	4056.60
FTSE 250	4521.70	+15.80	+0.4	4729.40	4469.40
FTSE 350	2112.80	+15.20	+0.7	2194.30	2017.90
FTSE SmallCap	2293.12	+3.89	+0.2	2374.20	2178.29
FTSE AllShare	2084.16	+14.16	+0.7	2183.94	1989.78
New York	6541.80	+99.90	+1.4	7085.16	5032.84
Tel Aviv	17933.59	+241.12	+1.4	19446.00	17303.65
Hong Kong	12342.02	+46.05	+0.4	13868.24	12055.17
Frankfurt	3327.68	+47.78	+1.5	3460.58	2948.77

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (%)	Year Ago	Long Term (%)
UK	6.08	6.94	7.53	8.09	7.82
US	5.63	6.47	6.88	8.50	7.09
Japan	0.50	0.56	2.17	1.99	-
Germany	3.22	3.41	5.82	6.46	6.82

BOND YIELDS					
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (%)	Year Ago	Long Term (%)
UK	6.08	6.94	7.53	8.09	7.82
US	5.63	6.47	6.88	8.50	7.09
Japan	0.50	0.56	2.17	1.99	-
Germany	3.22	3.41	5.82	6.46	6.82

MAIN PRICE CHANGES					
Index	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change (%)	Price (p)	Change (p)
Capital Group	687.5	52.5	8.3	FTSE 100	4286.80
Scottish Widows	430	32.3	8.2	FTSE 250	4521.70
Baxters Group	173	8	4.8	FTSE 350	2112.80

CURRENCIES					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
\$/£	1.6254	+0.0276	1.5078	£/¥	0.0182
\$/DM	1.8266	+0.0596	1.8078	DM/¥	0.0148
DM/£	2.8183	+0.1901	2.2773	DM/£	1.7389
¥/£	205.345	+10.339	193.403	¥/£	109.7
¥/DM	126.336	+0.005	108.376	¥/DM	106.1

OTHER INDICATORS					
Index	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
Oil Brent \$	18.03	-0.13	21.83	RPI	155.0
Gold \$	341.95	-4.8	393.00	GDP	109.7
Gold £	210.37	-3.51	200.64	Base Rates	8.00pc

من الأصل



COMMENT

At a time when new technologies should be opening up the world of pay TV and telephony to a legion of new players and competition, all manner of unholy alliances are being formed to defend the status quo.

Sky-BT alliance would put competition at risk

Any day now, BSkyB will be announcing its long-mooted link-up with British Telecom, Midland Bank and Panasonic to enable Sky to move into the digital satellite TV age. It is this partnership, codenamed Interactive Services Company, that will produce and sell the set-top boxes which enable the viewer to receive the new digital channels.

The deal is likely to be vintage Sky. At its peak the venture may require funding of anything up to £700m; the idea of bringing in partners is so that they should carry the cost, leaving Sky with a pretty much risk-free ride should the quest of persuading its analogue subscribers to switch to more expensive digital not prove fruitful. If it doesn't work, it will largely be BT, Panasonic and Midland Bank which pick up the tab.

The deal holds varied attractions to the other partners. Midland is in chief to finance it, and Panasonic because it is a leading manufacturer of TV sets. British Telecom is in there ostensibly because interactive TV requires the use of a telephone line and therefore might over time generate extra telephone traffic. All very neat and, since nobody else is prepared to fund the drive into digital pay TV, hard to fault.

As always in the affairs of Sky, however, there's something deeply troubling about the alliance, which is why Don Cruickshank, director-general of Ofcom, has asked for all aspects of the link-up to be revealed to him. What this deal marks is the final coming together of two of Britain's most entrenched

and aggressive monopolists - Sky and BT. It's hard to put your finger on precisely why the alliance of two monopolies should make the situation any worse for the poor old British public than it already is, except that we all know instinctively that it will.

If Sky is successful in its bid for digital terrestrial too, the situation will be made doubly worse. At a time when new technologies should be opening up the world of pay TV and telephony to a legion of new players and competition, all manner of unholy alliances are being formed to defend the status quo. From the point of view of Sky and BT, this is an eminently sensible and understandable strategy, but from a public policy perspective it should be resisted at all costs. The opportunity that exists at present for the development of real diversity and competition in these markets is in danger of being squandered.

Not that we can hope for much relief from a Labour government. Both BT and News Corp have spent long months cultivating the new Labour leader. Pay time approaches.

Rice fails to keep shareholders sweet

When it came to sorting out who would have the upper hand at the merged car parts business LucasVarity, there was never any contest. The old Lucas culture was quickly swept aside along with every executive it contributed to the combined board.

LucasVarity is Varity is Victor A Rice, its creator and now chief executive officer.

Where Mr Rice has run into trouble, however, is in trying to reconcile the conflicting expectations of his British and American shareholders. In the UK, Lucas shareholders have been brought up on a conventional diet of dividend growth. In the US, Varity investors are more accustomed to the share buybacks.

Yesterday Mr Rice sought to please both but ended up satisfying neither. His strategy of rewarding shareholders through a combination of buybacks and conventional dividends once again failed to kick start the share price which is now languishing 25 per cent below last year's high.

Given the gap in corporate cultures, it is never easy forging transatlantic alliances, as British Airways discovered with USAir and BT may be about to discover with MCI. In Mr Rice's case he has exacerbated the problem with the messy mechanism he has chosen for distributing capital. It is neither fish nor fowl and has therefore antagonised both London and New York at the same time.

But his bigger problem lies in the lacklustre prospects that LucasVarity conjures up. Once Mr Rice has used up the cost savings that the merger will generate, it is difficult to see where the growth will come from to keep shareholders sweet. Operating margins are barely moving, some of LucasVarity's most important markets in the US and Europe remain obstinately flat and the aero-

space business continues to sit uneasily alongside diesel engines and braking systems.

LucasVarity may be pleased with the progress it has made since last summer but no-one else is. The financial rationale for the merger looks as unconvincing as the industrial case. Poor Mr Rice is at his wits' end. He is not, he laments, getting the message across. In that, at least, he has the wholehearted agreement of the markets.

Government may tap into service sector

Renewed strength in the stock market, dragged up once again yesterday on the coat-tails of Wall Street, shows just how fixated investors have become on the Dow and on the hopes and fears for interest rates that are driving the American market. Research from BZW, suggesting equities are sitting on a £10bn fiscal timebomb, made not a jot of difference.

Which is surprising, because if BZW's figures are right, and an incoming Labour government breaks with tradition and starts to do something about the creaking public finances, shares are in for an extremely bumpy ride. An underlying £30bn borrowing requirement at this stage in the economic cycle is a clear sign that the sums are not adding up.

That sort of shortfall will take some unwinding and you can bet your bottom dol-

lar that in the short term it will not be the electorate that picks up the tab but the corporate sector, where the damage can be more acceptably disguised by the present strength in profits and cashflows.

Talk about tighter fiscal policy is easy in principle, but what it means in practice is that someone has to actually pay higher taxes. Raising the headline rate of corporate tax is a no-no so soon after that charm offensive on the business community, even if it is one of the few tax rates Labour has not committed to leave unchanged, so raising the £5bn BZW estimates companies will be asked to stump up will demand some cleverer ruses than that.

Capital allowances cost the Treasury £20bn a year, making them an easy target even for a party as fiercely critical about Britain's investment deficit as Labour has been. Kenneth Clarke tackled "long-life" assets in his last budget. Gordon Brown will want to tread a careful line on an approach to fiscal tightening that might threaten the investment it claims to champion.

Even so, he will find few critics if a change that clamps down on the allowances given to pub groups to turn up their estates or to property companies to refurbish their portfolios. Leisure companies and other service sector businesses, which are already facing the uncertainties of a minimum wage and consumers potentially looking at higher tax bills themselves, look especially vulnerable in the search for new sources of revenue.

Share valuations threatened by '£5bn tax increase'

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

The public finances are so fragile that an incoming Labour government will have to find up to £5bn a year in extra corporate taxes, new research claims, undermining earnings growth forecasts and putting a lid on dividend payouts.

Domestic companies face a double hit as personal taxes are also pushed higher in an effort to raise a total £10bn a year to reduce a bloated public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR).

As a result, BZW (said) this week, the stock market needs an unexpected interest rate surprise to justify its current level. Sectors at particular risk from a revenue-hungry new government include leisure, brewing and property, with oil companies and banks unlikely to escape the attentions of Gordon Brown for long.

According to Richard Kersley, equity strategist at BZW, the UK market remains fixated on the future direction of monetary policy after the election and has not yet taken seriously enough the threat of tax rises in both the consumer and corporate sectors. He believes Labour, which

has already signalled its intention to raise a windfall tax on the utilities, will turn its attention next to companies that, for a variety of reasons, currently pay less tax than the average.

Options for solving the revenue shortfall, which BZW believes will leave the public sector borrowing requirement at an uncomfortable £30bn this year, include an increase to the corporation tax rate, and more windfall taxes outside the utilities sector. More likely, given the policy priorities of a Labour government, is a widening of the tax base by closing loopholes or reducing allowances to put a squeeze on corporations perceived to have had an easy time.

The most widely discussed tax-raising option so far, an abolition or reduction of the tax credit on dividends, would be tempting for a Labour chancellor, but the issue is highly complex and BZW believes an early move on ACT is less likely than a more general review of the whole imputation system further down the line.

If taxes rise as BZW expects, the outlook for earnings growth will deteriorate considerably, from current 1998 estimates of about 10 per cent to as low as 7 per cent.

Dividends are expected to grow at a similar rate, but the squeeze on cash flow from higher taxes could mean that forecast is too optimistic.

Companies highlighted by BZW as being especially exposed due to extremely low actual and forecast tax rates include Railtrack, hotel group Skais and property developer Chelshfield as well as a host of utilities, including Anglian Water, Severn Trent and United Utilities.

Brewers, leisure companies and the property sector are all at risk, because capital allowances and the deductibility of much of their repair, maintenance and refurbishment bills mean they pay very low taxes.

Greencall, Vaux, Whitbread and BSkyB are all leisure companies that enjoy tax rates of under 25 per cent compared with the basic 33 per cent rate of corporate tax. Hammerson, Burford Slough Estates and MEPC are property companies that could be at risk from a Treasury looking to target low tax payers.

BZW believes the service sector could be the hardest hit, with firms' tax positions deteriorating at a time when their cost bases could be rising thanks to a minimum wage.

Show of hands joins 'world's best market defender' with 'world's best market attacker'



It's good to vote: Shareholders gather at Wembley to approve the biggest deal in UK corporate history

Photograph: Phillip Meech

BT shareholders vote for MCI merger

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

A show of hands consigned British Telecom to the history books yesterday after shareholders voted overwhelmingly to approve the planned merger with MCI of the US at an extraordinary general meeting in Wembley.

Around 620,000 of BT's 2.3 million small investors voted by

post, with more than 90 per cent in favour of the £13bn deal, the biggest in UK corporate history. Institutional investors, which own 74 per cent of BT, voted by 99.8 per cent to approve the merger.

A larger-than-expected contingent of 831 mainly retired shareholders turned up to yesterday's egm. When the vote came shortly after midday just a tiny scattering of hands were

raised in opposition. The vote will change the name of the company from British Telecommunications to Concert.

Though several investors questioned the price of the deal and its benefits for UK consumers, there was no mention of possible executive bonuses or pay rises.

Sir Iain Vallance, BT chairman, described the merger as a "rite of passage" combining "a

powerful mix of feistiness and stability". He said BT and MCI were "the world's best market defender coupled with the world's best market attacker".

The merger still requires clearance by the US regulator, the Federal Communications Commission and the European Commission. Sir Iain suggested the merger could be completed as early as the summer.

The egm was picketed by BT

managers who used the session to announce an escalation in their campaign of industrial action over pay. Up to five BT offices in central London will be affected by a three-day strike starting next Wednesday, called by the Society of Telecommunications Executives. The union, which represents 18,000 BT managers, warned customer service could be affected.

People & Business, page 26

IN BRIEF

- **Reckitt & Colman**, the household products and food group, has adjusted its 1995 accounts after being criticised by the accountancy watchdog, the Financial Reporting Review Panel, over its treatment of the £1bn acquisition of the L&F household products business. The adjustment, included in the 1996 accounts published yesterday, followed discussions between the panel and directors of the company, which owns Dettol and Lemsip. The panel had been happy with the provisional "fair value" adjustments made by the company in its 1994 annual accounts, which resulted in an increase of £750.5m to the net assets acquired. But it felt that the revised adjustment in the following year's document, which led to a further adjustment of £81.2m relating to the acquisition and a corresponding adjustment to goodwill, was short of detail for a transaction of this size.
- **The construction and sales of new houses** picked up during the first quarter of 1997, according to the National House-Building Council. The number of applications to start new houses, excluding housing associations, was 34,000, up 8 per cent compared with a year earlier. Sales reached an average of 632 a day, up 15 per cent year-on-year. Imtiaz Farooqui, chief executive of the NHBC, said this was a steady recovery but not a boom. Economists at City investment bank Nikko agreed. In a new report, "Where's The Boom?", he said: "There continues to be no sign of a renewed surge in housing activity." House prices rose strongly in the first quarter of this year, but other indicators edged back in the latest month.
- **Annual consumer price inflation** declined to 1.5 per cent in Germany last month, with a 0.2 per cent drop in the price level during the month. Lower food prices accounted for the fall, but there was no sign more generally that the weaker Deutschmark, leading to higher import prices, was feeding through into inflation. Reductions in wage costs in Germany, where unemployment remains near its post-war record, have offset this effect.
- **Leicester City**, the Premiership football club, is planning to come to the stock market. The club has called a shareholders' meeting for 9 May to change its share structure to enable a flotation. Tom Smeaton, chairman, said it was essential for Leicester City to have access to substantial levels of outside funding. He said that although flotation was not the only way of raising money, the status of a listed company would enable the club, if it chose, to return to the market for funds as the field this season, reaching the fifth round of the FA Cup and the Coca-Cola Cup Final which is due to replay next Wednesday.
- **Peugeot plans to invest £100m** to raise production at its UK factory in Coventry. The company said a new model would be built at the factory next year. A Peugeot spokesman said the investment would safeguard 2,500 jobs.
- **Sir Brian Pittman**, chairman of Lloyds TSB Group, said 1997 had "started well" for the group, with first-quarter profits "well up" on the prior year and volumes increasing. He told shareholders that at Lloyds TSB's annual general meeting in Edinburgh that the bank's net interest margin "has widened slightly and costs remain under tight control".

NatWest Securities at top of Reuters survey

John Willcock

NatWest Securities held on to top spot in the annual Reuters poll of larger UK company investment research published yesterday, but its lead slipped after a year which saw considerable turnover of staff.

The broadly based survey also found the fund management and securities industries were consolidating fast which was leading to the creation of several leading firms, which were recruiting heavily. For instance, the number of analysts in the City rose by 24 per cent last year to 1,530.

NatWest received 13.33 per cent of votes in the weighted survey of fund managers compiled by Tempest Consulting, down from 14.97 per cent in the 1996 poll. SBC Warburg was second on 12.75 per cent and HSBC James Capel third on 11.52 per cent.

Finance directors were separately polled by Tempest and UBS was placed in top spot with

Rank	Name	1997 Vote %
1 (1)	NatWest Securities	13.33
2 (2)	SBC Warburg	12.75
3 (3)	HSBC James Capel	11.52
4 (4)	UBS	11.29
5 (5)	BZW	10.71
6 (6)	Merrill Lynch	10.56
7 (7)	Dresdner Kleinwort Benson	8.1
8 (8)	ABN-AMRO Hoare	7.81
9 (9)	Govett	7.53
10 (10)	Chapman & Co	7.53
11 (11)	De Witt Lynne	7.43

12.89 per cent of votes, ahead of NatWest in second place and Merrill Lynch in third.

The NatWest oil team led by Fergus MacLeod was again voted best sector team. SBC Warburg won awards for best broker execution and best broker sales.

Finance directors voted Mercury Asset Management as best fund management group and the team at Schroder Investment Management as best individual fund manager.

Salomon profits almost halve

David Osborne
New York

Hurt by the return of rising interest rates, Salomon Inc, the parent of Salomon Brothers, reported a 44 per cent drop in first-quarter profits yesterday. The oaks contrasted with a 13 per cent rise in earnings to a first-quarter record at Merrill Lynch.

Salomon was badly hit in its bond trading division, where revenues tumbled, and in its commodities trading arm, Philbro. Overall, earnings fell to

\$175m (£106m), or \$1.44 a share, from \$310m, or \$2.75 a share in the same quarter a year earlier.

"Overall first-quarter performance was satisfactory, with market conditions that were more difficult than generally prevailed in 1996," said Robert Denham, the chairman of Salomon Inc.

Some decline in Wall Street earnings compared with last year, when most of investment banks turned in record performances, has been widely predicted.

JP Morgan last week reported a 3.4 per cent decline in profits because of stock and bond market troubles in the second half of March.

For now, however, Merrill Lynch appears to be bucking the trend. The largest of America's securities firms turned earnings of \$465m, or \$2.34 a share, from \$410m, or \$2.03 a share, in the same quarter last year.

The Salomon bond trading operation, the biggest in the world, saw a 29 per cent decline in revenue to \$519m.

Murdoch's son takes reins at News Ltd

Robert Milliken
Sydney

Lachlan Murdoch's status as heir apparent to his father's international media empire strengthened yesterday when Rupert Murdoch announced his son would take over complete responsibility for News Corporation's Australian operations.

Mr Murdoch's decision to elevate his son further up the corporate ladder came when Ken Cowley, one of his longest-serving lieutenants, stepped down as executive chairman of News Limited, the Australian subsidiary of News Corporation.

The retirement of Mr Cowley, 62, after 33 years serving the Murdoch empire, paves the way for Lachlan Murdoch, 25, to broaden his role in the empire against competition from his elder sister, Elisabeth, 28, who is considered a rival to succeed their father eventually.

Lachlan Murdoch has had a meteoric rise in News's Australian operations since his father sent him there to learn the business of newspapers and television two years ago.

After a year as general manager of Queensland Newspapers, a subsidiary in Brisbane, he moved to Sydney where he was promoted to managing director of News Ltd last September and appointed to the News Corporation board.

He takes over at a crucial time with News Corporation expanding its Australian interests through pay TV and the building in Sydney of a film production studio by Twentieth Century Fox, a News Corp arm.

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business

N Brown at home with mail order

N Brown may have decided against buying the Freemans home shopping business from Sears but chairman Sir David Allwright still sees plenty of room for growth for his family-controlled mail order group. One reason is the small share of the retail market controlled by home shopping. Currently it accounts for just 5 per cent of non-food retail sales in the UK, so N Brown still has the other 95 per cent to go at.

Another issue facing the company is the increased competition in the direct mail order market, though Sir David views even this positively. He believes the expansion of Marks & Spencer into clothing catalogues as well as similar moves by Burton will raise the profile of home shopping and help improve its image. He says the same of Great Universal Stores' ambitions to shift more towards direct mail order while reducing its reliance on the old-fashioned agency business.

Sir David and chief executive Jim Martin admit that there are no sizeable businesses out there to acquire and that even the stream of smaller bolt-on deals is drying up. But they point to a like-for-like sales increase of 21 per cent last year and a 15 per cent increase in sales since the year-end as proof that this efficiently run niche retailer still has further to run.

Its performance last year was certainly impressive with profits up 19 per cent to £37m and sales 21.5 per cent ahead at £280m. The Sartor catalogue business, acquired last year, contributed sales of £8m.

Though its traditional business has been with older female customers through catalogues such as Bury Boot and Shoe, N Brown is gradually targeting younger shoppers in their thirties.

It is also expanding its product range. Though clothing accounts for 57 per cent of sales the company is gradually expanding into other areas such as furniture, home products and electricals.

The company says there are 18 million women in its target age group in Britain and that it only sold to 1.4 million of them last year. It says sales can be built not just by attracting more customers but by encouraging existing shoppers to spend more.

Though clothing will still account for 50 per cent of sales for a few years yet, it is footwear and menswear which were the fastest growing sectors last year, increasing sales by 31 per cent and 38 per cent respectively. Given the poor performance of Sears's British Shoe Corporation, the footwear performance is particularly impressive.

N Brown's shares have been a terrific investment over the years, though they did take a hit when the company looked like it was going to buy Freemans. They rose 8p to 397p yesterday though they are still some way off their

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

451p peak at the end of last year. Still, on this year's forecasts of £42m, excluding Freemans due diligence cost of around £700,000, they trade on a forward rating of 20. About right for a high quality company.

Virtuoso score from Boosey & Hawkes

Shares in Boosey & Hawkes, the music group, rallied back up to a new all-time high yesterday, rising 57.5p to 822.5p, a position they were near for a large part of last year. Part of the reason has been the exceptionally tight market for the shares. The US music publisher Carl Fischer sits on around one-half of them and does not look like letting go, even though Hayden Connor, son of the family which owns Fischer, is stepping down as chairman after 10 years.

The reshuffle will cut Fischer's board representation to one, but there is no sign that the US group will match this with a willingness to relinquish its iron grip on the equity. That is a pity, because after eight years notching up

20 per cent per annum compound earnings growth, Boosey is getting close to the stage where its expansion needs will require a wider market for the shares and a greater ability to issue paper.

Yesterday's share rise came on the back of another sparkling set of results, which saw profits rise by a quarter to £7.7m in the year to December. Part of the increase was due to a maiden contribution of somewhat over £700,000 from Rico International, the Californian maker of clarinet and saxophone reeds acquired for £17.9m last summer.

Even without Rico, the musical instruments division again led the way at Boosey last year, showing a 23 per cent underlying rise in profits to around £5.1m. That was a decent performance against the background of dull markets in France, Germany and Japan and reflects a one-point rise in underlying margins after rationalising production and eliminating losses in Germany.

Publishing, up 3.4 per cent to £4.84m, would have shown growth of 9 per cent before exchange. Bote & Bock, acquired a year ago, will chip in this year. The much-touted court tussle

with Disney over the use of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* may be worth a great deal less than the £200m mooted originally, but anyway remains bogged down in the US legal system. Cash-financed acquisitions will be constrained by gearing of 11.6 per cent, and even if Boosey manages profits of £9.5m this year, the rating remains rich on a forward price/earnings ratio of 24. Hold.

Watts Blake taps into strong market

Bathrooms are one of the earliest signs of a developing country's move towards prosperity and as a result the market for ball clay, the raw material for sinks, toilets and tiles, is growing at a useful level in many parts of Asia and South America.

One of the highest beneficiaries of that trend has been Watts Blake Beane, the world leader in this admittedly obscure niche.

Last year was actually disappointing for the company, with profits falling 5 per cent to £10.7m and earnings per share sliding 8 per cent to 29.1p thanks mainly to flat markets in the UK and Europe, where the mature ceramics market is driven by replacements, not new build. In Germany, the second-largest division after the core Devon Clays, sales slipped 6 per cent, although cost-cutting measures helped profits back the falling trend.

The maturity of those two main markets has led the chief executive, Graham Lawson, to conduct a strategic review of what the company is and should be doing. Just completed, that review has rightly decided to maintain the focus on the ceramics industry (it is growing well), to increase the worldwide reach of the company (away from low-growth Europe), to spend more heavily on research and development to keep ahead of the game technically, and to bring in fresh blood to maintain the momentum of what is now a genuinely global company, albeit small in stock market terms.

The net result of that evolutionary approach should be a year of recovery from last year's disappointment and a return to the steady growth Watts has experienced since recession combined with a difficult start to its North American foray to knock profits at the beginning of the decade.

Forecast profits this time of £11.5m would imply earnings per share of 33p and a price/earnings ratio of 13 at yesterday's unchanged close of 435p for the thinly traded shares. That is a relatively undemanding rating for a company operating in reasonable growth markets and with the prospect of a bid from 49.5 per cent shareholder Sibelco of Belgium underpinning the shares.

Eyecare chief quits ahead of final results

Chris Hughes

Eyecare, the troubled spectacles group formerly known as Kitty Little, yesterday revealed a boardroom split over strategy, resulting in the resignation of André Cohen as chief executive.

The company, which is due to release full-year results tomorrow, said Mr Cohen left the group over "management differences" and "the future direction of the company". He had been chief executive since November 1994.

A spokesman declined to comment further on the row, but pointed to the poor performance of the company's French subsidiary, L'Amey, the spectacles frames and sunglasses manufacturer it acquired in 1994.

Mr Cohen's resignation follows the departure in January of finance director Julian Steadman and non-executive director Warren Kanders. Recently appointed finance director Alan Cox is to assume responsibility for Eyecare UK.

Last year, Mr Cohen received a salary of £152,000,

with bonus and benefits lifting his take-home pay to £229,000. He was on a one-year contract and is expected to receive one year's salary as compensation for loss of office.

In January he bought 150,000 shares in Eyecare for £19,500, prompting speculation that the group was on the verge of better times following a profits warning in December.

In addition to owning L'Amey, Eyecare imports sunglasses and reading glasses for distribution to UK high street retailers.

It ran into difficulties last year because of the weakness of L'Amey spectacles sales in France.

Rowan Simmonds, head of small companies at Eyecare's brokers, Credit Lyonnais Laing, said: "They are having a very difficult time in France."

"L'Amey is not making enough frames for designer brands because it is very difficult for it to do so commercially in France. It is up against some very efficient Italian competition. They need more hands." L'Amey already

supplies Lacoste and Cheviot spectacles. Last September Eyecare released disappointing interim results showing pre-tax profits down slightly from £2.5m to £2.4m on sales up £1m to £35m. Earnings per share were down from 3p to 2.3p.

At that time it forecast increased full-year sales. However, sales did not pick up and in December it warned that profits would be less than £1m, instead of an expected £3.5m. It blamed the weakness of the economy in France, which accounts for 40 per cent of the group's turnover, and a declining market for house brands, such as L'Amey world-wide.

Credit Lyonnais are forecasting profits of £800,000 for 1996, against £3.2m in 1995.

Eyecare had pinned its hopes on a deal agreed last November with Lantis, the US eyewear group, to distribute glasses for DKNY, Donna Karen and Reebok.

The shares closed down 12.5p yesterday at 13p.

Quant joins House of Fraser board

Mary Quant (pictured right), the British designer who revolutionised fashion with the mini-skirt in the early 1960s, has joined retail group House of Fraser as a non-executive director.

A company spokesman said Ms Quant's experience of the fashion and retail business would benefit House of Fraser, which sells clothing and cosmetics through its chain of Dickinsons & Jones, Army & Navy and DH Evans stores.

Ms Quant opened her first shop, Bezaar, in King's Road, Chelsea, in the early 1960s, followed by the launch in 1967 of the Mary Quant cosmetics range.



Red alert among BT shareholders

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

On the historic occasion of BT's egm yesterday to vote on the merger with American giant MCI there was the usual fringe of investors who posed, shall we say, esoteric questions to Sir Iain Vallance, BT's urbane chairman.

Things began to slide rapidly downhill when one shareholder pointed out that the same word could mean different things on opposite sides of the Atlantic.

The problem was the shareholder didn't explain exactly what the word was. Sir Iain, with typical British tact, smiled and said: "Interesting question."

The highlight of an otherwise dull meeting was the investor who informed a stunned assembly: "The Americans have often fought against the colour red."

"In the 18th Century it was the redcoats, in the 19th Century it was the redskins, and in the 20th Century it was the Reds [the communists]."

He added that BT had reintroduced the colour red on the top of its redesigned telephone boxes. Would MCI's US executives force this to be changed to blue, he wondered?

Was this a joke? By this stage it was hard to tell, but Sir Iain simply smiled again. What the two MCI board members on the podium made of all this is hard to say. Perhaps they put it down to that wacky English sense of humour.

Tony Hales, chief executive of Allied Domecq, is a born and bred Aston Villa fan. As such, he could not stand idly by while his beloved club was being floated. He therefore resigned yesterday for his non-executive directorship at Hyder, formerly Welsh Water, in order to assume a similar position at the Brummie club, which announces its float price today.

Villa, currently standing in the higher reaches of the Premiership, hopes to cash in on the latest craze for quoted clubs. It is aiming to raise £15-20m on flotation and will be capitalised at between £120-140m.

Earlier this month Villa appointed

Mark Ansell, head of corporate finance at accountants Deloitte & Touche in the Midlands, as its finance director. David Owen, senior corporate partner at Edge & Ellison, the law firm, also recently joined as a non-exec.

Just for the record, Allied Domecq's Teacher's Whisky sponsors Bath Rugby Club. Speaking as a Bath supporter, I wonder if this presages joint use of grounds, or perhaps a player-exchange. I'm sure Steve Ojomoh and Jeremy Guscott could sharpen up Villa's tackling.



Culture clash: One shareholder put a coloured slant on the history of the US

Sticking with football, Crystal Palace chairman Ron Woods and manager Steve Coppell were both at the Divert Challenge Cup on Monday, a charity tournament for youth teams in association with KPMG. The footy extravaganza at the Ferndale Centre, Brixton, also attracted the support of Lord Elton, chairman of the Divert Trust and former home secretary, and Bernard Clow, partner in charge of community projects with KPMG.

The shindig attracted teams from all over the country, and the winners of the

Under-14 cup were Lambeth Tigers. The final went to penalties, and the Tigers beat sick-as-a-parrot West Wycombe 8-7. In the Under-12s Fenstanton Junior School were over the moon as they beat the junior Lambeth Tigers team 3-0. Quite remarkable.

Dresdner Kleinwort Benson has appointed Xavier Rolet, a 38-year-old Frenchman, as its London-based head of trading and equity risk. Mr Rolet will work alongside Mark Potashnick, head of equity risk, before assuming full control. Mr Potashnick will then concentrate on "broader management issues" as deputy head of the equities business.

Young Rolet has a cv a headhunter would sell his mother for: a graduate of the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce and Columbia Business School in New York; 10 years with Goldman Sachs; two years as managing director of European equities with Credit Suisse First Boston in London and the past year doing consultancy work for Bayerische Vereinsbank in Munich. I'm sure that German stint clinched it with Dresdner.

The people over at Barclays Bank are very cross about recent press reports suggesting the bank is about to axe its eagle logo, first used in 1936.

The rumours follow HSBC's decision to axe the Midland Bank griffin in favour of HSBC's dull affair, a red version of St Andrew's cross.

When asked about clipping the eagle's wings, a Barclays spokesman says this is "not the case at all. We have been reviewing our branding for some time and this is a process which will go on. Nothing is imminent."

Sounds like "Bye Bye Birdie" to me.

John Willcock

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Company Results				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Asit Control (F)	0.57m (0.08m)	702,943 (227,067)	4.28p (1.71p)	0.5p
Bowsey & Hawkins (F)	94.43m (87.1m)	7.7m (6.17m)	27.2p (20.3p)	9.34p (7p)
Il Brown (F)	280.47m (230.8m)	27.1m (21.2m)	17.03p (14.42p)	6.5p (5.7p)
Dean Corporation (F)	14.96m (8.01m)	951,000 (213,000)	1.85p (0.32p)	0.5p (0.2p)
Demotest (F)	9.24m (8.04m)	538,959 (388,068)	3.8p (3.0p)	0.5p
Jensen Finlay (F)	109.2m (106.1m)	12,03m (8,52m)	6.8p (4p)	3.85p (3.15p)
Hammerway Prop (F)	- (-)	6.5m (2.9m)	3.0p (1.9p)	0.55p (0.5p)
S. Jerome (F)	33.4m (28.54m)	1.14m (951,000)	8.1p (7.5p)	3.0p (2.25p)
Lancaster (F)	2.67m (-)	280m (-)	- (-)	- (-)
Mid-States (F)	79.5m (63.49m)	3,72m (288,000)	4.8p (4.0p)	0.48p
Woodfield Estates (F)	6.01m (7.63m)	58,000 (65,000)	4.2p (6.77p)	0.5p
Star Group (F)	26m (41.93m)	222,000 (7.3m)	0.25p (5.08p)	nt
Shore Group (F)	12.27m (11.47m)	532,000 (547,000)	6.7p (6.8p)	4.2p (4.2p)
Watermark (F)	11.82m (8.77m)	653,313 (40,000)	2.3p (0.24p)	0.5p
Watts Blake Beane (F)	102.8m (104.97m)	10.71m (11.25m)	28.1p (31.7p)	16.2p (15.2p)

Chiroscience shares jump on trial results

Magnus Grimond

Chiroscience, the biotechnology group, saw its shares jump 14.5p to 380.5p yesterday after announcing the latest in a series of successful phase III trial results for its levobupivacaine long-acting local anaesthetic.

The Cambridge-based group said the tests, involving 60 women at St James's Hospital in Leeds, had shown the drug's efficacy was equivalent to the epidural anaesthetic used for childbirth, bupivacaine.

Chiroscience claims its product is a safer version of bupivacaine, which is made by Astra under the Marcaine brand and can cause side effects ranging from tingling to convulsions.

Analysts reacted favourably, Ian Smith of Lehman Brothers said the findings confirmed earlier trials and added weight to expectations that the drug would come to market. He put a value of 400p on the shares, before adding in last year's acquisition of Durwin, the US company backed by Bill Gates.

مكتبة من الأصل

Taking Stock

❑ **Watermark**, a marketing specialist, jumped 6p to a 34p peak following profits of 2653,000 against a 560,000 loss. Stockbroker Dutchaser calculates £1m will be pulled in this year. But it is ignoring any possible contribution from a deal to manage the Miss World Contest, the old Eric Morecambe partnership which is being sold in the Seychelles in November and still has a big world-wide following. Miss World came in for heavy criticism in this country but John Caulcutt, Watermark's chairman, said: "It will be presented in a different and refreshing way compared with what went before." The shares were floated at 13p.

❑ **Maid**, the on-line information group, should make profits of £10.1m this year and £17.7m next. Merrill Lynch says buy. The shares are 234.5p.

[illegible]

sport

Whatmore has the know-how

Guy Hodgson talks to Lancashire's new coach who has taken on possibly the hardest job in county cricket

In a metropolis which also contains Manchester City, the dangers inherent in high profile sporting positions are always relative, but if you had to pick the hardest job in county cricket, then coach to Lancashire would be high among your options.

Consider John Stanworth. Under his guidance, Lancashire won the NatWest Trophy and Benson and Hedges Cup last season which would satisfy most cricket committees. Not at Old Trafford though. His reward was to be demoted to community of floor, the price paid for a dismal season in the Championship.

Stanworth is not alone in suffering for Lancashire's obsessive desire for a prize that they last won in 1950 and shared in 1934. Jack Bond, Alan Ormrod and David Hughes have all been

impaled on the thorns of the red rose while, in becoming England's coach, David Lloyd has more than any of them, been unspooked by punishment.

The latest man to be tested on the rack of the members' anticipation is Dav Whatmore, a 45-year-old Australian whose undying claim to fame will be his coaching of Sri Lanka to the World Cup just over a year ago. After mission impossible, some would say comes the impossible. "I'd only been here a few days and I'd lost count of the number of members telling me they expected Lancashire to win the Championship," Whatmore,

who took over at Old Trafford in February, said. "It's a very proud club with a great tradition. The expectation is enormous."

Whatmore is part of a growing Australian influence in this country. Already five counties have men from Down Under in some executive capacity, while other clubs are awaiting the announcement of the Ashes tour party tomorrow before revealing the name of their overseas professional.

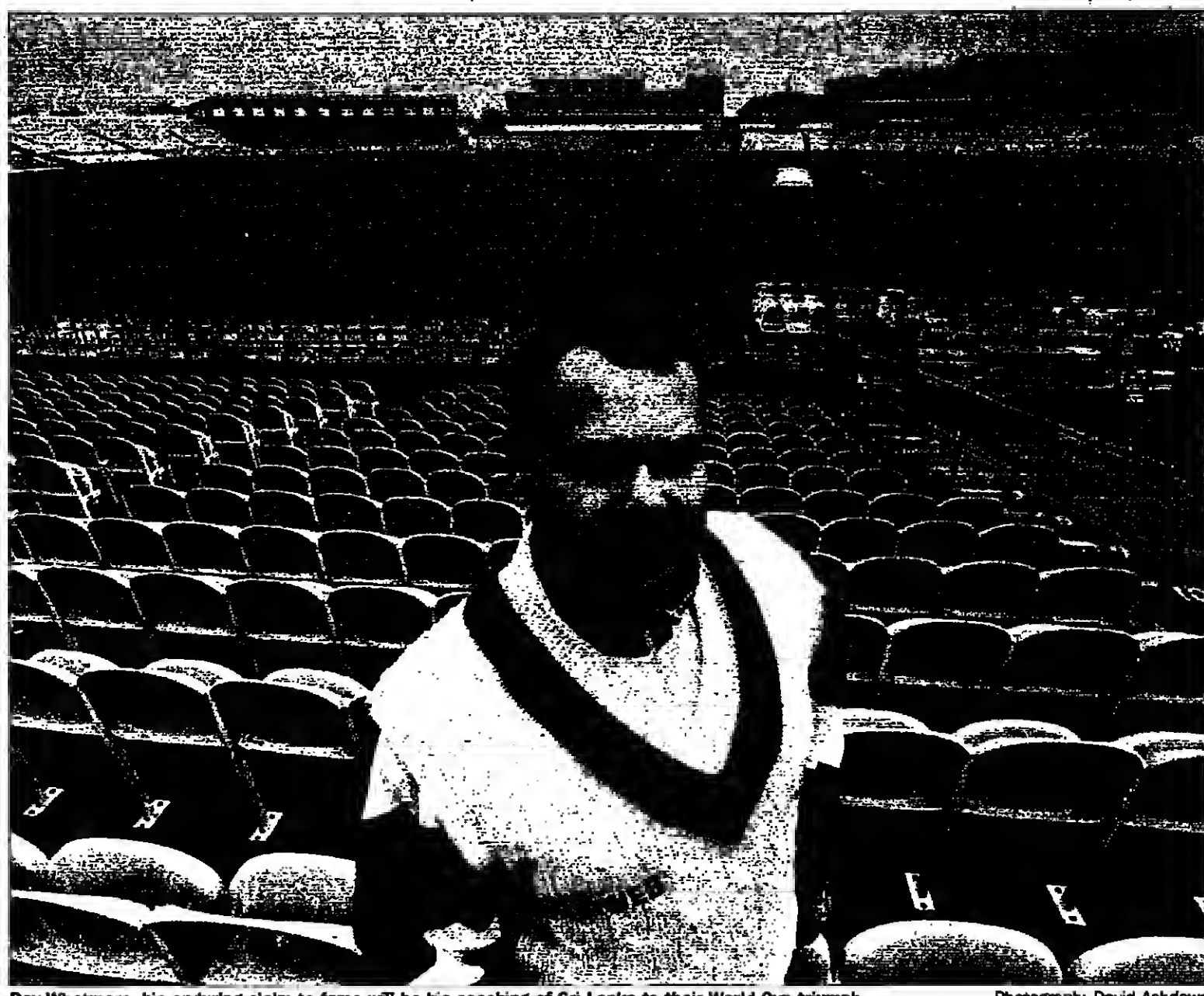
He is more interesting than most, however, if only for his openness to new ideas and methods.

"I've lost count of the number of members telling me they expect Lancashire to win the title"

look at other sports because sometimes the answer is outside cricket."

A compact batsman who played seven Tests at an average of 22.53, Whatmore's post-playing career took off when he was appointed head cricket coach to the Institute of Sport which, conveniently, was set up in his home state of Victoria. "I thought it would be the easiest money I'd ever earned," he said, "but I found it extremely difficult and after one year I was close to quitting."

"I was coaching 20 boys the way I'd been coached and it doesn't work with every individual. I had to learn to ap-



Dav Whatmore, his enduring claim to fame will be his coaching of Sri Lanka to their World Cup triumph

Photograph: David Ashdown

proach each one differently. I made mistakes, I had my immediate boss on my back but the second year was better and the next better still. By the end it was pretty good."

So much so that offers began to come his way. Australia were the rising force in world cricket and it became desirable to open their methods. Mark Nicholas wanted him to coach Hampshire second XI but Sri Lanka were also interested. Whatmore, who had been born in Colombo before emigrating to Australia as an eight year old, chose to go home.

His job was to guide Sri Lanka as far as he could in the

World Cup, something he did beyond expectation when the trophy duly arrived. His gamble was to employ Sanath Jayasuriya and Romesh Kaluwitharana as explosive pinch hitters who, when they came off, could launch an innings at more than 10 runs an over. England's attack was obliterated by the tactic in the quarter-finals.

"It was horses for courses basically," Whatmore said. "Let's not forget one of them was a wicketkeeper and the other was a spin bowler who fielded brilliantly. We had the luxury of flexibility within the team and the strength elsewhere to

recover if it went horribly wrong."

"We always discussed the situation where we could be 0-2, which happened a couple of times. Fortunately we had another five top-class batsmen to follow them, so if they came off it really broke the game up and put the opposition under enormous pressure. If they didn't, we still had the confidence to know these other guys could bat."

There is the novel and there is the ridiculous, and when Whatmore first arrived at Old Trafford reports filtered out that his players were expected to train at 6am. "That got out of hand," he laughed. "I

thought most of the guys had day jobs so I was hoping to get a session of training in before they went to work. Fortunately it only applied to the captain, Mike Watkinson, who devotes particular attention to his personal fitness anyway. "The players have been very receptive. There's a very high skill level within the club. I don't think there's any passengers at all. Now I want to ally that to better preparation and back-up. There will be greater attention on the support areas: sports medicine, nutrition and psychological factors that make up the whole person."

Can all this help Lancashire

win the Championship? "I hope so," he replied. "We'll have two players leaving the team to join England and I'd like to think there will be others who progress to higher duties. That means we have to have strength in depth to cover their absence. So far I've been impressed. It's a talented group. "What will be satisfactory to me will be if each player improves this season. My job is to make everyone the best they could possibly be. If they make progress towards that I shall be happy."

The question, as the season begins, is: will that make Lancashire happy, too?

Smith to fight for England Test spot

The Hampshire batsman Robin Smith has not given up hope of forcing his way back into the England side for this summer's Ashes series against the Australians.

Smith's Test career was put on hold 14 months ago by the former chairman of selectors Ray Illingworth after the side's disappointing winter tour to South Africa. But now Smith is aiming to impress Illingworth's successor, David Graveney, and the new selection panel which includes two of his former England colleagues, Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting.

Smith, who has scored 4,236 runs in 62 Tests at an average of 43.67, said: "I am only 33 years old and feel I still have plenty to offer at international level. It's up to me to get the runs for Hampshire and then force the selectors to consider me."

"This is a big season for me and it is a big one for England in an Ashes series, and my record against the Australians is as good as anyone's. I remind myself that I was a Test player only 14 months ago and I am fitter now than I have ever been."

Smith realises that he faces a battle to regain his place, but he added: "I have a great desire to get back into the England Test team and the Australians are so powerful that I think there might be a vacancy or two in the latter stages of the series."

"I have missed Test cricket more than I thought I would. It had been part of my life for eight years, summer and winter, and it was good to hear that David Graveney is wiping the slate clean and giving everyone a chance."

Hampshire's captain, John Stephenson, is backing his colleague to regain his place. "Robin is a world-class player full of ambition and must still be an England contender because he has a lot of cricket left in him," he said.



INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

LATEST RESULTS AND TOP 50 TEAMS

Top Fifty LEAGUE TABLE

CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 6 APRIL

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	MR PETER FRANKENTAL	JOSI MARTI	885
2	MR PAUL MATTHEW	THE DOOR MAT	863
3	MR ASHLEY BRETTE	RELEGATION 12	861
4	MR SEAN BROSNAN	OASIS	855
5	MR SIMON LIU	DEFENCE ROVERS	852
6	MR KEITH HARRY	ORGANIC MANURE FC	849
7	MR WILLIAM BARR	KRUGER FC	847
8	MR ALEXANDRA FEAST	THE ZOROSTRIAN ZENETIC ZYGRE	847
9	MR RICK YAP	OUT OF MIND	843
10	MR BEN KENDALL	TURKEY'S TRIGGERS	841
11	MR SIMON DRAPER	PLATE FC	840
12	MR IAN GROUP	SILK CITY	840
13	MR G WHITE	WHITE CITY	840
14	MR SCOTT MCINERNEY		839
15	MR ANDREW BOLTON	ANDREW'S B TEAM	838
16	MR GRAHAM LONGSDANE	SANDLING STROLLERS	837
17	MR JOHN COX	SOUTHILL FC	836
18	MR GARFIELD MACALEER	GARFIELD BOYS 2ND	835
19	MR ADAM HOGG	SLAGGY HOGG	835
20	MR PETER FRANKENTAL	SANDINO	833
21	MR D R MILLS	THE MUSHROOM LAYERS	833
22	MR TERRY JONES	ANDREON UNITED	831
23	MR PETER FRANKENTAL	ARIENSHU	830
24	MR J GODWIN	NORWOOD	830
25	MR BEN ANDREWS	BOOZERS BATTLES	828
26	MR A SWANNEY	DOG'S BRICK	827
27	MR JONATHAN MCCROSSIN	WASH TOP ARMY	827
28	MR O J JOHNSON	THE AWAY WINNERS	827
29	MR A MORGAN	KICK START	827
30	MR PAUL HOOKES	NOBBIES BOYS	827
31	MR ANDREW GODDEN	EC ALZEY	827
32	MR S J PERRY	THE GREAT ESCAPERS	826
33	MR J LILLY	JEWELS REMMY'S GONE MISSING	826
34	MR WAN HOOD	EAST GATE ROVERS	826
35	MR JONATHAN DAVIS	GOLDEN TEAM	825
36	MR TONY AKINDALE	OLLIE VILLA	824
37	MR MARK HAYDEN	TROWBRIDGE WANDERERS	824
38	MR ANDY LANE	IF ANYONE CAN TOUCAN	824
39	MR STEVE BAZZNOT	BAZZY'S DEFENCE	822
40	MR GARY HAYLES	ISI ALLSTARS	822
41	MR TIM PAUL GERMAN	ATHLETICS AESTHETIC I	822
42	MR F J GREAVES	ANONYMOUS ROVERS	821
43	MR J ALDOUS	MEN BEHAVING WELL	821
44	MR MARTIN RENNICK	WILD ROVERS	818
45	MR P CURRAN		818
46	MR ADAM DEACON	ADAM ACES	818
47	MR ROBERT GREENFIELD	THE GULLS	818
48	MR H WOODHOUSE	LEBURNS CHIST	817
49	MR K B MALCOLM	INTER MALCOLM	817
50	MR PAUL FULLWOOD	KING OF HOBBIES FC	817

THE INDEPENDENT INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

Today we publish the latest results in our Independent Fantasy Football game, supported by Philips Energy Saver Light Bulbs.

The Team Market and Scores table published below, shows four scores. The Week 35 (Wk 35) column lists all points scored in Premiership matches played between Monday 7 April - Sunday 13 April inclusive. Column B lists all points scored before the transfer period. The Overall (Ov) column lists the total amount of points scored in all matches played from Saturday 17 August - Sunday 13 April.

Also published today is the Top 50 League table (see left). It lists the overall top scoring Independent Fantasy Football managers and their teams for matches played between Saturday 17 August - Sunday 6 April.

Results will be published every Wednesday in The Independent for all games played from the previous Monday to Sunday inclusive. They will also appear the following Sunday, in the Independent

SCORING SYSTEM

4 points for a goal ■ 4 points for a goalkeeper/defender clean sheet ■ 3 points for a successful assist ■ 1 point when a player is selected and plays ■ 1 point for a winning goal ■ 3 points for a manager win, 1 point for a draw ■ Lose 1 point for a yellow card ■ Lose 3 points for a red card

TEAM MARKET AND SCORES

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 13 APRIL, WEEK 35 SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 7 APRIL - 13 APRIL																				
CODE	TEAM	POINTS			VALUE (£100)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS			VALUE (£100)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS			VALUE (£100)	
		Wk 35	B	A					Wk 35	B	A					Wk 35	B	A		
GOALKEEPERS																				
401	Scunthorpe	ARS	2	31	3.0	477	Ruddock	LIV	1	2	31	3.0	649	Sutton	OER	0	15	12	27	1.2
402	Barnsley	ARS	2	26	4.4	478	Harman	LIV	1	2	31	3.0	650	Aspinwall	DER	0	15	12	27	1.2
403	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	479	Harman	LIV	1	2	31	3.0	651	Van Der Laan	DER	0	15	12	27	1.2
404	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	480	Neville EGI	MU	1	2	31	3.0	652	Edwards	DER	0	15	12	27	1.2
405	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	481	Neville EGI	MU	1	2	31	3.0	653	Kamoharui	DER	0	15	12	27	1.2
406	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	482	Palmer	MU	1	2	31	3.0	654	Parkman	DER	0	15	12	27	1.2
407	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	483	Palmer	MU	1	2	31	3.0	655	Shurt	DER	0	15	12	27	1.2
408	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	484	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	656	Grant	DER	0	15	12	27	1.2
409	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	485	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	657	Palmer	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
410	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	486	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	658	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
411	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	487	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	659	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
412	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	488	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	660	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
413	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	489	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	661	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
414	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	490	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	662	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
415	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	491	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	663	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
416	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	492	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	664	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
417	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	493	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	665	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
418	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	494	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	666	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
419	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	495	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	667	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
420	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	496	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	668	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
421	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	497	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	669	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
422	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	498	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	670	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
423	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	499	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	671	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
424	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	500	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	672	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
425	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	501	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	673	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
426	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	502	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	674	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
427	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	503	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	675	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
428	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	504	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	676	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
429	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	505	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	677	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
430	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	506	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	678	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
431	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	507	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	679	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
432	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	508	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	680	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
433	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	509	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	681	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
434	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	510	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	682	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
435	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	511	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	683	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
436	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	512	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	684	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
437	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	513	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	685	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
438	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	514	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	686	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
439	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	515	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	687	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
440	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	516	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	688	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
441	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	517	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	689	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
442	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	518	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	690	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
443	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	519	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	691	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
444	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	520	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	692	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
445	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	521	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	693	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
446	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	522	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	694	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
447	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	523	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	695	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
448	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	524	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	696	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
449	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	525	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	697	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
450	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	526	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	698	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
451	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	527	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	699	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
452	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	528	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	700	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
453	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	529	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	701	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
454	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	530	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	702	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
455	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	531	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	703	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
456	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	532	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	704	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
457	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	533	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	705	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
458	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	534	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	706	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
459	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	535	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	707	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
460	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	536	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	708	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
461	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	537	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	709	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
462	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	538	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	710	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
463	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	539	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	711	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
464	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	540	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	712	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
465	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	541	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	713	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
466	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	542	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	714	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
467	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	543	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	715	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
468	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	544	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	716	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
469	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	545	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	717	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
470	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	546	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	718	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
471	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	547	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	719	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
472	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	548	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	720	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
473	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	549	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	721	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
474	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	550	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	722	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
475	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	551	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	723	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
476	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	552	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	724	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
477	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	553	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	725	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
478	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	554	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	726	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
479	Sheff Wed	ARS	2	26	4.4	555	McManus	MU	1	2	31	3.0	727	McManus	LEE	0	15	12	27	1.2
480	Sheff Wed																			

sport

Maggs settling into the good life

A player's view of rugby's new professional landscape depends largely on his vantage point, and from where Kevin Maggs is standing life looks pretty good. This time last season, Bristol's promising young centre earned a crust by laying kerb stones – a hundredweight each, 600 a day – so it does not require the imaginative gifts of a JRR Tolkien to appreciate the upturn in his fortunes.

Sure, there are 22-year-old centres who command a bigger seasonal stash than the £30,000 or so Maggs can expect to rake in over the course of a campaign, and needless to say the one-club local boy raised just a couple of hundred yards from Bristol's Memorial Ground is a positive pauper when you place him next to Newcastle's much-travelled midfielder, Va'anga Tuigamala. (Five grand a week may be small change to Tiger Woods or Fabrizio Ravanelli but it makes a mighty big splash in rugby's little pond.)

None of that is of the remotest concern to Maggs, however. When you are used to spending 12 hours a day in some God-forsaken Bristol cul-de-sac with nothing but a mountainous pile of unaided concrete blocks in your field of vision, professional rugby throws back the curtains on a very alluring vista indeed.

"Professionalism has transformed my life," he says with barely a second's thought. "Because I rarely, if ever, considered what full-time rugby might be like – my only ambition when I first broke into the Bristol Colts XV was to make the senior team – the way I live now is beyond my wildest dreams."

But it became difficult, in-

Chris Hewett talks to a young Bristol centre about the difference the advent of professionalism in rugby union has made to him over the past few months

evitably, I fell out with one of my direct bosses over the amount of time I was taking off for rugby – I could appreciate his point of view because he had to pull in people to fill in for me – and frequently, I would have to work all day Sunday to make up my time. It was crazy, I'd be black and blue from the day before, aching all over. My heart would sink when I saw this huge articulated lorry dumping huge pallets of kerb stones in front of my face.

By doubling his salary with the stroke of a pen on a two-year

'I rarely considered what full-time rugby might be like. The way I live now is beyond my wildest dreams'

contract – Maggs also has a share in a players' commercial fund – he has been able to move out of the family home in Horfield and what is best for them financially, as well as in a rugby sense. There are no regrets, though. It's a wonderful way of earning a living.

In a sense, this season's bitter wrangle between the leading clubs and the Rugby Football Union was all about players like Maggs; young, committed sportsmen who put their bodies on the line week in, week out, without any hope of generating the six-figure incomes enjoyed by their distant cousins in the international elite. It will take time to iron out the inequities and inequalities of the new professional era, but at least a start has been made. Kevin Maggs, for one, is happy to be part of the process.

Maggs is a young man with a natural strength – Maggs is very definitely one of the most

physical centres in the top flight of the Courage League – comes from getting his hands dirty in the now faraway world of manual labour. In doing so, he stands foursquare in a venerable rugby tradition that harks back to the days when every All Black forward was a farmer and every Welsh prop was whistled up from the nearest mineshaft.

"Looking back, I think the hard work I was doing before full-time rugby gave me the sort of strength you can't really develop in a gym, no matter how much from your pump. Actually, I go pretty easy on the weights and concentrate more on my pace and ball skills. Those are the areas I need to improve. My strength takes care of itself because of all those kerb stones."

"Had the game not gone professional, had we continued on the shambles road with a few bob here, a match fee there, a win bonus somewhere else, I would still be a Bristol player. When I captained the Colts and Under-21 sides, success and recognition were the things I'd set my sights on. Money didn't really come into it at all. It's different now, of course, and players have to do what is best for them financially, as well as in a rugby sense. There are no regrets, though. It's a wonderful way of earning a living."

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Kevin Maggs takes a time out while playing for Bristol, perhaps to reflect on how much his life has changed

Photograph: Peter Jay

WHO EARNS WHAT IN THE NEW MONEY-RICH PROFESSIONAL GAME

Thanks to the spin-doctoring realities of modern politics, we hear next to nothing these days about the redistribution of wealth. It is not a phrase of which the modern rugby player is too fond, either, particularly those at the top end of the sport, where business is booming.

Even within the narrow confines of the 12-team Courage League First Division, the wages and salaries are sharply divided. Indeed, the field of contrast can be narrowed further still, depending on his club, an England regular could earn twice the salary of the Springboks.

Simon Shaw, a former England international, is a good example. He, too, has a choice and is unable to play for the club he wants. He is now on the list of players who are also available for hire. Shaw, for example, can be hired for £250,000 a season while others shiver themselves to sleep on £25,000 or less.

And the further down the scale you drop, the colder it gets. Non-contracted players at Bristol – a League One club, remember – are given retainers worth as little as £30 a week and, as a result, have no real stake in the brave new world of professionalism. They continue to hold down full-time jobs and, if they live any distance from the Memorial Ground, effectively pay to play.

Balloon figures are difficult to calculate because every club operates on a different budget. That is not only true for the top-flight outfits, but also for the junior sides on the lower rungs of the Courage League ladder; for every goal-kicker who pockets £10 a point in Durham and Northumberland One, there are others in Lancashire South or Eastern Counties Five who pocket not a penny.

Much is certain, though: the influence of money at all levels of the game will only increase. It might now be easier to unweave the wheel than free rugby from the grip of the folding stuff.

Versatility should be hallmark of England's squad

Mark Mapletoft and Paul Sampson are likely to add to England's armoury of versatility when the squad is announced tomorrow for the two-Test tour of Argentina next month.

Gloucester's Mapletoft, leading the country's scorers with 450 domestic points, can operate at stand-off or full-back. Sampson, the Wasps sprinter, is a wing or full-back. Add Mike Catt, whose ability to appear in three positions has been mysteriously ignored by the South Africa-bound Lions, and England have the necessary options for a physically demanding tour.

even though there are only six games.

Sampson could spearhead a small representation from England's under-21 generation, as the national selectors try to continue the process of filtering in younger players, after bringing in 11 new caps this season. They can afford to experiment in the backs, because most of the Five Nations players outside the scrum are unwanted by the Lions and will therefore provide the experience in Argentina.

Phil de Glanville will be surrounded by a host of familiar

faces, including the wings Jon Sleighthorne and Adebayo Adedeji, plus Catt and the scrum-half Andy Gomarsall. There might be another club colleague, too, if the selectors have as high an opinion of Matt Perry as Bath do.

Tom Beir, of Sale, is a wing candidate, along with the A-team regular Dan Luger, while Richmond's Jim Falcon could be called upon to Test cap, after being in sight of honours before he crossed over to rugby league.

Kyran Bracken will be the second scrum-half and in the pack it will be a policy of mix-

ing the capped players with the best of the A team. The props should be Kevin Yates, John Mallett, Darren Garforth and Rob Hardwick. The top-choice hookers are Richard Coockill and Phil Greening.

At lock, Garath Archer and Dave Sims might be backed by John Fowler and Dave Baldwin – the pair who have provided a significant foundation for Sale's success.

In the back row, Ben Clarke and Chris Sheehy's experience will blend with Martin Corry, Tony Diprose and possibly Steve Ojomoh, with the Harle-

quins pair Rory Jenkins and Bill Davison also having a chance. With 18 Englishmen on the Lions tour, some players who were way down the pecking order at the start of this season will come back home with a couple of caps.

They might be getting their chance through the back door, but against the Pumas on their red velvet headgear.

Will Carling took a similar mix of old hands and newcomers to Argentina in 1990 and could only draw a harder than expected series 1-1.

London Welsh's cash lifeline

John Taylor, the former Wales and Lions flanker, is spearheading a consortium offering a £500,000 lifeline to London Welsh, the struggling Third Division side. The proposals of Taylor's group will be put to members with the intention that Welsh, the supreme club in England in the 1970s, regain their glory days.

A club statement yesterday said: "The directors of London Welsh agreed that an offer to restructure and refinance the club should be put to members. A consortium of supporters has raised £500,000 as the first step

in an initiative aimed at re-establishing Welsh as one of Britain's top clubs."

Phil de Glanville is out of Bath's team to face Orrell on Saturday. The England captain has a badly bruised toe and is replaced by Matt Perry, who played at full-back against Leicester last Saturday.

The former Scottish international flanker Eric Peters returns after two months out with a serious hand injury which required an operation. He replaces Nathan Thomas, who fell victim to a dead leg on Saturday. The former England

back row international Steve Ojomoh is at No 8, as the US Eagles captain Dan Lyle is using a groin injury.

Leicester's dwindling hopes of catching Wasps have been undermined by injuries to a dozen players as they prepare to face London Irish tonight.

Tigers, five points behind leaders Wasps, will be without the captains who have shared the duty this winter. Duan Richards and Martin Johnson, Richards is one of the back-row players unfit, the others being John Wells, Will Johnson, Eric Miller and Neil Back.

Ballsbridge loses out as Games venue

Equestrianism

The magnificent Dublin showground in Ballsbridge will no longer host any part of next year's Nissan World Equestrian Games. The whole event, which covers six equestrian disciplines, will now be held at Punchestown Racecourse in County Kildare, writes Genevieve Murphy.

"Due to the development of a hotel on the site there is a significant reduction in the space available to accommodate our plans for the venue," James Osborne, the chairman of WEG Ireland, said yesterday.

It has been rumoured that WEG and the Royal Dublin Society, which owns the Ballsbridge showground, were unable to agree terms for holding the show jumping, dressage and vaulting competitions there. These disciplines now join three-day eventing, carriage driving and endurance riding at the County Kildare venue, where a £7m development to upgrade the facilities and build a National Equestrian Centre is about to begin.

Osborne acknowledged that the decision "represents a significant departure from the original plans". The International Equestrian Federation confirmed its support for the Games in Ireland, but clearly has no option at this late stage.

There is bound to be some disquiet at the move away from Ballsbridge, which has been a wonderful showcase for equestrian sport for more than a century. There will, however, be logistical and financial advantages to running all the competitions at one venue.

Rowell seeks a return to the flair days

Genevieve Murphy reports on the man who intends to spur an adventurous spirit in Britain's three-day event team

At Parker's suggestion (firmly endorsed by the other selector, Angela Tucker) Rowell will keep hold of the reins at this year's European Open Championships at Burghley by filling the role of *chef d'équipe* himself.

"That's the trouble with having two ladies on the committee, they gang up on you," Rowell said with a chuckle. "Now it means that my neck is going to be on the block twice." It also means that he can give an unequivocal message to the British riders before they set out on their cross-country journey at Burghley.

Even though they hold the world and European team titles, few British riders of the 1990s have shown the sort of flair at cross-country that was once epitomised by Lucinda Green. Nowadays it is the New Zealanders and Australians

who remind us of Green in her heyday. Under the plans being laid by Rowell down on his arable farm in Hampshire, we would see a welcome return of the old British style.

Rowell is already well-known as the director of the Windsor Three-Day Event (this year's fixture will be his 10th at the helm) and for the 10 years he spent as *chef d'équipe* to the Young Riders' European Championship teams. His tally of team medals during that decade amounted to four gold, two silver and two bronze.

Some of today's senior riders (notably William Fox-Pitt, Kristina Gifford and Pippa Funnell) are already familiar with Rowell's relaxed style of leadership, having been briefed by him on young rider teams. These three were among the 31 riders on the Winter Training

list, who have met up with Rowell and his two fellow selectors at one of the three training courses held last month.

Rowell, an Olympic gold medalist in 1972 and chairman of the selectors from 1993 to 1996, is also well-known to most of them. Former chairmen do not usually carry on as selectors, but Rowell believed that some measure of continuity was vital. "I was also aware that Bridget has a huge amount of knowledge at her fingertips and that she is well respected by the riders. It would have been daft to throw those assets out," he said.

Tucker, another able and knowledgeable woman, will be one of the three members of the Ground Jury at Badminton from 8 to 11 May. They will officiate at the horse inspections and judge the dressage.

Having Angela on the jury

is a big advantage to us, because it means that Bridget and I won't have to watch all the dressage," Rowell said with a smile.

A shortlist for the European Open Championships, to be held from 11 to 14 September, will be announced immediately after Badminton. The list will be longer than usual since Britain, as host nation, is able to field a total of 12 riders – the usual squad of six from which the team is chosen, plus six to compete as individuals.

Rowell will be "very disappointed" if the second six does not include some young horses and some of the less experienced riders. "This will be a golden opportunity for them to gain experience," he said.

With his term of office lasting for four years, Rowell is thinking ahead to next year's World Equestrian Games and the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Some of the younger riders could be among those whom he will urge to go for gold in Sydney.



Giles Rowell: Bold approach Photograph: Robert Hallam

Football

7.30 unless stated

COCA-COLA CUP FINAL REPLAY
Leicester v Middlesbrough (24.5)
(at Sheffield Wednesday FC)

FA CUP FIFTH ROUND
Barnet v Liverpool (24.5)
Newcastle v Chelsea (24.5)
Wimbledon v Leeds (24.5)

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE
FIRST DIVISION
Mill City v Grimsby (24.5)
Swindon v Woking (24.5)

SECOND DIVISION
Gillingham v Stockport (24.5)

Q&N VALLEY CONFERENCE
Gateshead v Stevenage (24.5)
Morecambe v Halifax (24.5)

FA YOUTH CUP Semi-Final Second leg
Leeds v Luton

UNIONBANK LEAGUE Premier Division
Accrington Stanley v Spennithorne. First Division
Bradford PA v Stockbridge. Droylsden v Flinton.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE Midland Division
Rugby Town v Upton Town. Peterborough

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7.30 unless stated

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Newcastle v Chelsea (24.5)
Wimbledon v Leeds (24.5)

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE
FIRST DIVISION
Mill City v Grimsby (24.5)
Swindon v Woking (24.5)

SECOND DIVISION
Gillingham v Stockport (24.5)

Q&N VALLEY CONFERENCE
Gateshead v Stevenage (24.5)
Morecambe v Halifax (24.5)

FA YOUTH CUP Semi-Final Second leg
Leeds v Luton

UNIONBANK LEAGUE Premier Division
Accrington Stanley v Spennithorne. First Division
Bradford PA v Stockbridge. Droylsden v Flinton.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE Midland Division
Rugby Town v Upton Town. Peterborough

Football

7.30 unless stated

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First Division
Leicester v Middlesbrough (24.5)
(at Sheffield Wednesday FC)

FA CUP FIFTH ROUND
Barnet v Liverpool (24.5)
Newcastle v Chelsea (24.5)
Wimbledon v Leeds (24.5)

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE
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مكتبة من الأصيل

